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J Y McGinnes

A SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS

OF THE

REV. JAMES Y. M'GINNES,

OF SHADE GAP, PA.,

BY THE

REV. D. L. HUGHES,

OF SPRUCE CREEK, PENNSYLVANIA.

"Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

JOHN VI. 12.

PHILADELPHIA:

JOSEPH M. WILSON,

228 CHESTNUT STREET.

1854

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P R E F A C E.

BOOKS live, when those who wrote them are dead. A good book, like a true Christian, is of inestimable worth. They are both sentinels for truth—for God. They are both “epistles,” the one “living” the other “written,” and each may be read of all men “to the praise of the glory of God’s grace.” The more, therefore, both are multiplied the better; they will have not only their day, but their healthful influence.

The following unpretending sketch has been prepared, because the author, with many others, felt that everything relating to one who was so universally beloved, and so useful in his “day and generation,” ought not to be lost to the Church and the world—that although comparatively young and unknown when he died, his noble traits of character, and his labors in behalf both of education and religion, seemed to demand an extended notice. In the attempt, the author has been encouraged at every step by the special providence of God, and by the best wishes of not a few in regard to the enterprise.

The following expressions alone, from a widowed mother, have contributed much to nerve him for the work, and to sustain him under it amidst his varied professional engagements—"My whole heart thanks you for your kind proposal to rescue from oblivion those (to me) precious relics, from *his* mind and pen. To the children and myself, if we are spared, such a sketch, as you design preparing, will be invaluable." He humbly hopes that the result will not be in vain. While he is especially anxious to honor his divine Master in rescuing from oblivion those "precious relics" of a trophy of redeeming grace, and desires that many may thereby be blessed, he also hopes that this humble tribute of affection and esteem for the deceased will prove a source of gratification and profit to his many surviving and mourning friends.

He designs it to be a visible memento of an endeared son, brother, husband, father, and friend.

As the deceased was a universal favorite, sharing deeply in the admiration and affection of all who knew him, the author has thought that a somewhat minute detail of the events of his life, and especially of his last sickness and death, setting forth the power of religion to sustain in both life and death, would be generally acceptable.

The deceased kept no diary. Had he done so, it might have been filled with many stirring incidents; and containing, as it would have done, an exemplification of the inward as well as the outward man, it would have been of very great service to his biogra-

pher. But for any such incidents of his life and character we must look elsewhere. And his biographer would here gratefully acknowledge his indebtedness in the preparation of this sketch to the timely suggestions of several of his ministerial brethren, and to the cheerful assistance of the relatives and friends of the deceased, especially to the fertile memory and judicious remarks of his bereaved partner, and to his room-mate and college companion, the Rev. S. C. M'Cune, of Fairfield, Iowa, and formerly his near neighbor in the ministry in Illinois. Although much may be said in his favor, and but little against him, it must not hence be inferred that he had no faults, for these in some form and to some degree ever accompany depraved and prostrated human nature, even in its best estate. But we believe his faults were few, and were better known to himself than to others.

Like the devoted Brainerd, the deceased, perhaps, erred in his being excessive in his labors, not proportioning his toil to his strength. The remark that was made about the lamented Hewitson, who died at nearly the same early age, will apply to him in all its force—"Here is one of those godly men, whose holy fervor exceeds the endurance of their bodily frames, whom God permits to shorten their lives apparently by ardent desire and action, that a half-worldly and lukewarm Church may get a scriptural idea of zeal for God through a living example, an epistle known and read of all men."

Some may think that he erred also in cherishing too much of an ambitious spirit, for he always aimed to be among the first. But his was a laudable desire—a holy ambition. The principle by which he was actuated did not degenerate into that low, envious, and selfish ambition which characterizes some, but it was a noble-hearted impulse to action, and a high resolve to do his best for God and man—to make the most of his time, talents, and privileges—and so to answer best the great end of his being. His ambition displaying itself in his untiring industry did not consist in his detracting from the merit of others, or in wishing that they might not do well, but rather in a fixed purpose to discharge faithfully his own duty, and, if possible, therein to excel; while at the same time he was among the very first in consecrating all his attainments and energies to the honor of his divine Master. Like Paul, his language was—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” But his success was the occasion, sometimes, of exciting the envy of others, which he has been heard to say, was one of his afflictions. Though he was well known to many, yet, it is believed, he was not fully known. Had his physical strength been equal to his mental and moral ability, he would have shone among the foremost in our ministerial ranks; he would have stood *high* upon the battlements of our Zion, while he would have cried aloud and spared not.

The sermons published in this volume are but a few out of many that might have been presented. The great difficulty was, in making a suitable selection out of such a mass of manuscripts very illegibly written. In this selection, the author may have erred, but he hopes enough has been done to give a correct idea of the brother's style of thought and expression, as also to secure profit to the reader; though it must be expected that much of the interest that attached to these sermons will be lost, because of the absence of their author's earnest and affectionate manner of delivery. It is also proper to remark that they never received that revision, and consequently not that finish and polish, which they would have received from his own hand, had he prepared them for publication.

Similar remarks might be made in reference to his able and eloquent address, delivered before the Philo and Franklin Literary Societies of Jefferson College, immediately preceding his death, and which may be found at the close of this volume.

The author will only add, that the publication of the following work has been delayed longer than he at first intended, and that he is conscious of many imperfections in the execution of it; but he offers as an apology for these, the fact that it has been prepared amidst the constant interruptions, cares, and toils inseparable from the life of a pastor in a widely extended rural charge. He leaves the volume, however, as it is, in the hands of Him who giveth or

withholdeth his blessing as seemeth Him good ; while he requests the candid and pious reader to overlook all imperfections, and to unite with him in the petition that the volume may, by the Divine blessing, be useful in the edification and consolation of those who read it. If this petition be granted, his largest expectations will be realized.

D. L. H.

STOVER'S PLACE, PA., April 1, 1854.

LIFE OF THE REV. J. Y. M'GINNES.

HIS PARENTAGE AND BOYHOOD.

THE REV. JAMES Y. M'GINNES, who died at Shade Gap, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, on Sabbath morning, August 31st, 1851, in the thirty-sixth year of his age, and the eleventh of his ministry, was born at Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, December 8th, 1815. He belonged to a pious household. He was born within the pale of that covenant which is "ordered in all things and sure," whose promise is "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." His father, George M'Ginnes, emigrated to this country from Ireland with his parents—who were Presbyterians—in 1787; and soon after settled in Sherman's Valley, now Perry County, Pennsylvania, where he united with the Presbyterian Church of Sherman's Creek, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Brady. In February, 1806, he was ordained a ruling elder in that congregation, and he has served the church in that capacity with fidelity and accept-

ance ever since—a period of 47 years, he being now 77 years of age.* In 1814 he removed to Shippensburg. His former wife, ere this, having died and left one daughter, he was now married again to Mrs. Catharine Reynolds, a widow lady and a native of Maryland, who also had one daughter from her former marriage. Both of these daughters are still living, are married, and have families. They were very dear to Brother M'Ginnes, and he often spoke of them, as having encouraged and cherished in him that fondness for books, which he manifested at so early an age.

James was the oldest of five children—three sons and two daughters—all of whom are now dead except one daughter, the wife of the Rev. Alexander C. Hillman, of Saugerties, Ulster County, N. Y. He was early dedicated to God, by his believing parents, in baptism, and they were faithful to their covenant vows in instilling into his youthful mind the principles of our holy religion as taught in the Bible, and as ably set forth in the standards of the Presbyterian Church. They were equally careful, by holy example, fervent prayer, and wholesome discipline, to guard his morals, as they were anxious, by timely instruction, to advance his intellectual culture.

* George M'Ginnes, Esq., died August 6th, 1853, at Shippensburg, in the 78th year of his age. An interesting obituary notice of this estimable man may be found in the Presbyterian of August 20th, 1853, or in the Presbyterian Banner of August 27th, 1853.

His constitution was naturally feeble, and he was a delicate child until he was seven years old. After that he became more robust. He is said to have been a wild and mischievous youth; like Bunyan, he was exceedingly fond of sport in his very childhood, and this trait of character, though much chastened, did not leave him in after years: but, in connexion with this, he is also described as a boy of uncommon sprightliness and promise, and as one who always made rapid progress in his studies.

Accordingly, we find even his earliest years marked with success. When he was but four years old he could read almost any book that came in his way. He was, too, immoderately fond of reading; his hat was seldom found without a book of some kind in it. He had also an astonishing memory. At an examination to which he was taken, held by the Rev. Dr. Moody, pastor of the Middle Spring Church, he recited when only between four and five years of age, the whole of the Shorter Catechism, and a great part of Willison's Mother's Catechism; and for recitations at the Sabbath School he early committed to memory large portions of the New Testament which he never forgot. Often has he been heard, during the course of his ministry, relating to children his own experience as an incentive to their studying the Scriptures in childhood, telling them they would never regret the effort made nor forget the truth acquired.

He was sent to school when very young, and was kept there constantly. This, perhaps, was one cause

of his delicate state of health. He said himself, he was satisfied that his brain had been too heavily taxed, and his constitution enfeebled by such close confinement in childhood. And he has frequently been heard to say, when speaking of his own children, that he greatly disapproved of sending them too constantly to school, or confining them to their studies closely, until they were eight years of age.

When in his seventh year, a small sum of money having been presented him, his mother suggested something that he might get with it. He replied, "papa provides food for the body, I want to get food for the mind." Accordingly, "Sanford and Merton," was added to his store of juvenile books. Thus was the old proverb again verified, "the child is father of the man," for here the man was seen in the boy. This fondness for reading, this strong thirst for knowledge, was nothing but the soul, with which God had endowed him, bursting forth—a longing for something higher and nobler. It was ever with him a powerful mainspring to effort. It led to a development of his native genius, and to his varied attainments of high scholarship, refined taste, and fervid eloquence.

He had, from a child, a desire to be a minister of the gospel. He would, sometimes, mount a store-box in the back yard and preach to his younger brother and sister; and as ministers were often entertained at his father's, he was a close observer of their conduct. At one time,—as the custom then was for ministers to "use a little wine," and sometimes stronger drinks, for their "often infirmities,"—when he saw a

minister, who was there, drinking brandy very freely, he thought to himself, he has said,—“Oh, well, I will be a preacher some day, and then I can get brandy to drink too.”

His sister, Mrs. A. Hillman, tells us, that when he was about eight years of age, he said to her one day, as they were in the store together, that he intended to write a book of hymns during his leisure moments in the store, and that she must not tell any one of it until he had finished it. He accordingly commenced the work, and wrote some twelve or fourteen hymns, and as he finished each one he read it to his sister and then concealed it in his hiding-place under the window. She does not pretend to say how good the hymns were, but at the time she thought them as good as any she had ever read, and in the simplicity of her childish heart felt proud to think that she had a brother who could make books. However, other things took his attention, and book-making was abandoned; but it showed that spirit of enterprise which so much characterized him in after years. Of the “hiding-place,” Mrs. M’Ginnes says, she has very often heard him speak, as it proved a great convenience to him, often, in concealing books which he knew his father would not suffer him to read.

He perused many large volumes in his father’s library before his father thought him capable of understanding them. The immortal “Pilgrim’s Progress,” he read so often that he had very nearly memorized it. In after years, he often lamented that

he had not followed his father's judicious advice in regard to works of fiction, rather than to have spent so much time in his youth in the perusal of novels, that were both ephemeral and enervating.

When about thirteen years of age he commenced the study of the languages in his native town; but after he had been thus engaged for some time he became very tired of his task, and then might be seen :

“The whining schoolboy, with his satchel,
And shining morning face, creeping like snail,
Unwillingly to school.”

This reluctance to prescribed recitations deepened, until one evening he brought home all his books, and told his father he should like to rest awhile from severe study. “Well,” said his father, who was a man of quick discernment and great decision of character, “you can exercise yourself in the clearing, picking brush.” He tried it for a few days, but soon concluded it was more pleasant, if not easier, to study than to be thus engaged, and so returned to school. This is not the only instance of the kind upon record. We are informed that many years since, when the late Lieutenant-Governor Phillips, of Andover, Massachusetts, was a student of Harvard College, owing to some boyish freak, he left the University, and went home. His father was a very grave man, of sound mind, and few words. He inquired into the business but deferred expressing any opinion until the next day. At breakfast he said, speaking to his wife,

“My dear, have you any cloth in the house suitable to make Sam a frock and trousers?” She replied, “Yes.” “Well,” said the old gentleman, “follow me, my son.” Samuel kept pace with his father, and as he leisurely walked near the common, he at length ventured to ask, “What are you going to do with me, father?” “I am going to bind you an apprentice to that blacksmith,” replied Mr. Phillips. “Take your choice; return to college, or you must work.” “I had rather return,” said the son. He did return, confessed his fault, was a good scholar, and became an excellent and useful citizen. If all parents were like Messrs. M’Ginnes and Phillips, the students at our academies and colleges would prove better scholars, or the nation would have a more plentiful supply of farmers and blacksmiths.

The reason why our brother became weary in his studies, was not because he had no talent for the study of languages; for he possessed, as we are afterwards told, a surprising facility in the acquisition of these, and mastered no less than seven different tongues besides his native one, the Spanish, French, German, Italian, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Of these he spoke the French fluently, and gave instruction in most of the others. Nor could it have been for want of energy of character, that he was led at the very foot of the ladder to despair, as too many do, of ever reaching the top with emotions of pleasure; energy was a distinguishing trait in his whole life, from his youth up. But the true reason of such

weariness, no doubt, was either because his feeble body and excited brain were overtaxed by the close confinement, and the severe application of the school-room, and he longed to be at liberty for a little season, that he might breathe, free of restraint, the pure and invigorating breezes of heaven; or, which is perhaps the better reason, because he was, as he often said himself, "fonder of play than of study, when he was under the care of the Latin master of his native village."

Being eminently social too in his disposition, and gifted naturally with a fruitful fancy, a retentive memory, and an unusual activity of both body and mind, he was always ready to entertain his companions, and to take the lead in all kinds of play, as well as in study.

Having made very commendable progress in the various branches taught in the Academy, with the approbation of his teacher, the best wishes of all his companions, and the consent of his beloved parents, he prepared to remove to a higher seat of scholastic training.

HIS COLLEGE LIFE.

IN the fall of 1832, when about seventeen years of age, Mr. M'Ginnes went to Jefferson College, and entered the Sophomore class. One of his classmates, the Rev. S. C. M'Cune, who entered college at the same time with him, and who afterwards became his room-mate, and was for years his most intimate friend,

writes of his social and intellectual characteristics thus: "During the greater part of his collegiate career, he exhibited but few traits that would distinguish him from that class of youths, that occupied an honorable and respectable position in their different classes and college societies. Perhaps, if he differed from them in any respect it was in the remarkable sprightliness of his temperament, the eminently social qualities of his mind, and his astonishing powers of memory. As a natural consequence of such peculiar dispositions, he was fond of amusement and sport. And as he often said, he was fonder of play than of study when under the care of the Latin master of his native village, so he was not as distinguished for burning the midnight lamp, or poring over the musty folio, as the character of his recitations and literary performances would seem to indicate.

"He possessed a surprising facility in the acquisition of language, and from the exuberance and sprightliness of his fancy there were but few among the hundreds of his college associates who surpassed him in the richness, beauty, and strength of his literary productions. Though among the first in the 'foot-ball field,' and at the 'alley,' and in the social club, he was nevertheless among the first in his class, and in the esteem and honor of his society."

But his social and intellectual position is not the chief thing to be regarded. His moral and religious character needs especially to be pondered, whether it

were ripening him, amidst all his external privileges, only for "the bottomless pit," or were preparing him "as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," to shine for ever among the ransomed of the Lord, amidst the splendors of the Eternal Throne. Happy are we to be able to state that "Christian, the highest style of man," adorned his character—that his college life proved to be not only one of the most interesting, but also one of the most glorious periods of his life. He went to college, in the good providence of God, not to be ruined, as too many are, but to be saved. It was there that he became experimentally acquainted with the doctrine of the new birth, and that he first tasted of the preciousness of a Saviour's love, and of the "joy in the Holy Ghost."

Though absent from the wholesome restraints of home, a father's pious counsels were engraven upon his heart; and he was still a child of faith, and prayer, and tears. Under such an influence, known or unknown, he was among the most likely ones who would share in any special mercies from a covenant-keeping God.

Accordingly, during an extensive revival of religion at college, in the winter of 1834-5, he became one of the subjects of God's renewing and sanctifying grace. Notwithstanding all his youthful levity, his carnal blindness, his indifference, and even opposition to divine things, he was "effectually called," according to the good pleasure of God, and in the appointed

time, by the Spirit of grace accompanying the faithful dispensation of the truth, out of nature's darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel, and fitted to be a polished shaft in his Master's quiver.

An eye-witness has written of this period, in substance, as follows: "Christians had grown cold; ambition drove forward the students with an iron rod; the spirit of rivalry between the literary societies connected with the college ran high; and wickedness and insubordination prevailed to an alarming extent. It appeared as though Satan himself had been let loose to rule at will the impenitent. In the midst of this darkness, the Rev. Dr. Brown, President of the College, alluded to it as a ground of encouragement to Christians, and, consequently, as a loud call for earnest, importunate prayer.

About this time, when things apparently could get no worse, and when Christians had been driven to God in prayer, the hour of deliverance came. The Rev. Mr. Deruelle, agent for the American Tract Society, a plain, practical preacher, came to Canonsburg. A protracted meeting was held; days of fasting and prayer were appointed. The members of the Church were urged to humble themselves, and to pour out their hearts before God, assured that he would bless them just in proportion as they were prepared to receive his blessing. The works of Baxter, Allein, and Flavel, now were circulated freely, and the pious dead began to speak for God. Religious interest was awakened. It was evident that there was a shaking among the

dry bones,—that God was in the midst of his people. Several became deeply concerned about their spiritual state. Their numbers daily increased; some of the most consistent and conscientious members of the Church for a short time gave up their hope; and, ere long, a multitude from the ranks of the ungodly were found crowding the inquiry-meeting, desiring an interest in the prayers of God's people, and anxiously asking, in the language of the jailer, 'What must I do to be saved?' The stores in town were closed; boarding-houses became solemn as churches, and the presence of God seemed to pervade every mind. Among the openly wicked, various courses were taken at this time. Some left college, some scoffed, some stood and looked on with amazement, and some yielded to the strivings of the Spirit. Among those that mocked, and yet, under the powerful strivings of the Spirit, yielded their whole hearts to God with ingenuous confession and earnest supplication, was our lamented brother."

The following graphic sketch of this part of his history, from the pen of his endeared room-mate and bosom companion, will be read with interest: "With regard to his religious dispositions during the earlier part of his college course," he writes, "but little can with certainty be known, and that more negative in its character than positive. It is reasonable to infer, from the influences and restraints that gathered their blessings around his childhood and early youth, and from the solicitude known to have been cherished

for him as a child of the covenant by his excellent father, that he had seasons of deep solemnity and pungent conviction. But it was not until the winter of '34-5, that his impressions and convictions assumed a visible and permanent form. The state of religion in the College church, under the care of the Rev. Dr. Brown, had been extremely low for years, and from the number of expulsions and suspensions in the College, we must infer that the state of morals among the students was in a deplorable condition. Drinking and card-playing parties were not unfrequent, and sorry we are to record, that to those parties Mr. M'Ginnes and his bosom friend and room-mate were not entirely strangers. The regular communion season in the College church approached. The Saturday evening previous came, and while the man of God was delivering his message, and souls were trembling before the awful thunderings of Sinai, there was a select party gathered in an upper chamber, not far distant, in which wine and revelry were the distinguishing characteristics. The Sabbath came. It was a sweet and awful day. Proud spirits, that had never quailed before, were riven by the Spirit of the Highest, and at their wit's-end were crying, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' The meetings continued. Religious interest deepened. The inquiry-room became crowded. God had come down among the rebels of Jefferson College, and was proving himself mighty to bend the rebellious will,

and lead captivity captive. 'The people were filled with wonder and amazement at the things that were done.'

"Tuesday afternoon came, and found two thoughtless youths, who had been hitherto unreached, sitting together in their room, and, half-serious and half in jest, recounting the singular events that were transpiring around them. In a jocular manner, one of them said to the other, 'M., your old man gave you a Bible, and so did mine; there they lie with the dust and cobwebs of three months on them: let's get them down and read till night, and go to meeting?' 'Agreed!' was M.'s immediate and hearty response. The dust was wiped from the neglected Bibles, and for two hours did those thoughtless boys, in silence, peruse the sacred page, more, perhaps, out of respect for the long-forgotten injunctions of their fathers, than for the Word itself; yet, as they afterwards believed, in consequence of the silent interweaving of the Holy Spirit's influences, with the almost unfelt convictions and remonstrances of their conscience.

"They entered together the house of God; thence one at least was drawn, he scarcely knew how, to the inquiry-room, thence to his now lonely chamber, where, for two days and nights, he wrestled for mercy, and, with his first waking thoughts on the morning of the third day, experienced a peace he never knew before—a joy that was unspeakable and full of glory. But where was M.? He had not darkened the door, nor broken the awful silence of that

chamber from the moment he had laid his Bible down, and started for the house of prayer.

“On the morning alluded to, while his friend lay contemplating the beauty and love of his glorious Redeemer, the door was opened, and M. appeared. He started. ‘My dear M.,’ said his friend, ‘what *have* I done, that you have so long deserted the room, and left me alone?’ ‘I was afraid to come here,’ was his significant reply. ‘I was glad you stayed away,’ said his friend. ‘Why?’ was his quick inquiry. ‘Because,’ replied his friend, ‘I feared you would jeer and joke me out of my convictions and fears,—but now, oh! M., I have hope—I have joy!’ In an instant he sprang upon the bed, shouting, ‘Bless the Lord, oh my soul! I have hope, I have joy, too!’ They were clasped in each other’s arms, in an intensity of brotherly love they had never known before. After the overwhelming emotions of the moment had subsided, M. recounted to his friend the steps by which he had been brought to the feet of Jesus, and clothed in his right mind.

“On the evening when they entered the house of God together, he had heard the searching, spirit-stirring message of Christ’s ambassador, and the Spirit of God had given it demonstration and power in his conscience, and he had gone out, not knowing whither he went, yet determined not to surrender. In this his purpose was fixed, and in order to arm his resolutions, and, if possible, dissolve the strange spell that had come over him, he retired to a beer-

shop, and having drank a glass or two, he went across the street toward his room. He reached the gate, put his hand upon the latch, but could do no more. Several attempts were made to open and enter, but they were ineffectual. Having been in this position, as he thought, about a quarter of an hour, he felt himself impelled towards that same inquiry-room from which he had so recently hurried with repugnance and determination.

“ Shrinking and fearful, he entered that still and awful chamber. Behind the door he took his seat, while his friend was in front. They did not see each other, and when they left the inquiry-meeting, the one went to his room to weep and wrestle alone, and the other went with a student, whom before he had literally hated, where he enjoyed his prayers and counsels, as well as his hospitalities, until on the morning of the third day, when hope dawned, and joy poured her consolations upon his soul. Ignorant of the sore conflicts his friend had experienced, and supposing him to be still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, he had come to beseech him to be reconciled to God. He found him hoping—rejoicing in possession of that good part which he trusts shall never be taken away.

“ Mr. M'Ginnes and his friend, whose religious history commenced under auspices like these, derived very essential encouragement and comfort from the sympathy and counsel of a godly young Welshman, the Rev. Griffith Owen, who attended daily at their

room for weeks, for conversation and prayer. These occasions are to be remembered with gratitude to God as seasons of refreshing and solid satisfaction. Evening and morning, the two young brothers in Christ offered the incense of grateful prayer upon the altar of God, as long as they continued the occupants of the same bed and the same chamber."

So soon as Mr. McGinnes had obtained "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," he signified the same to his father in a letter, giving a brief description of his exercises and hopes, and asking his parent to join with him in thanksgivings, and to remember him in his prayers. His father replied immediately, acknowledging the event to be the gift of God in answer to his prayers for his child, expressing his matured conviction of the faithfulness of God as a covenant God, and appropriating to himself the language of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

The following letter, just referred to, from Mr. M'Ginnes's own hand, will be read, no doubt, with additional interest upon this most eventful part of his history:—

Canonsburg, Saturday morning,
Dec. 27th, 1834.

DEAR PARENTS:—I sit down to write to you, but where shall I begin, and what shall I tell you first? Shall I tell you that I am well? Yes, more; I shall

tell you the news—the delightful news—that I entertain a blessed hope that I have an interest in Jesus. Yes, dear, dear parents, I have come weak, wretched, guilty as I am, and cast myself at the foot of his cross. Oh! how precious is he to my soul! Oh! you know not the wickedness—the depravity of my heart. You know not how I have been deceiving you and deceiving myself. I have been standing careless and unconcerned on slippery rocks, whilst fiery billows have been rolling below me. Blessed be God! that your prayers, and the prayers of my dear friends here have been answered, and that I have been brought to see my wretched, lost condition, and to cry mightily unto the Father of spirits, that he would give me faith through his dear Son. Oh! I have been spending that money, time, and talents which a gracious God has given me, in the service of the devil. I have been ruining myself, and deceiving you. Will you—can you forgive me?

But it is time that I should tell you how this blessed work was brought about. Last Thursday a week was a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, appointed by the Synod of Pittsburg on account of the low state of religion in the churches within their bounds, and that God would pour out his spirit and revive his work in them. The day was observed here with solemnity, and on last Sabbath the Lord's Supper was administered in the College chapel. A protracted meeting was held, and Dr. Brown was assisted by a minister from New York, the Rev. Mr.

Deruelle, a dear man indeed. There was a solemnity pervading the hearts of all God's people. On Tuesday night, all those who wished to be conversed with were requested to go to the "Senior Hall" after the congregation was dismissed. Mr. Deruelle had preached a very pointed discourse from the text: "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God; he hath said in his heart, thou wilt not require it?" I felt somewhat impressed during the service with the wretchedness of my condition as a sinner, but tried to banish the impression from my mind. And for this purpose I started down to a beer-shop, to laugh it away with some of my ungodly companions, and I scoffed—yes, scoffed at God and his religion. Oh, what unmerited mercy that I have been spared! Still I could not banish my convictions. The Spirit of God was striving with me, and I knew it. I left the beer-shop, and went up towards the College. I felt a something—a load—of which I would like to be relieved. I heard just then singing in the "Senior Hall." I wished I was there. I went into the College, and listened. I started to go up stairs towards the hall, and some person whom I did not then know, as it was dark, started up with me. When I got on the first landing-place I stopped. I asked this person, whom I then found to be a Mr. Penser, a pious young man, if he was going in. He said he would like to, but Dr. Brown had said that only sinners who had the will to come should go up. He said he thought it would be interesting. I expressed a desire to go in,

but was ashamed to go in by myself. He said he would accompany me then. We went in, and when I got in I saw some of my companions deeply distressed. I knew not what to do. I sat down weeping, and prayed that God would break my stubborn heart. Dr. Brown came and talked to me. I wept bitterly, and told him how I felt. He tried to point me to Jesus, but my depraved heart would not relent. After we were dismissed, I went to Dr. Brown and to Mr. Deruelle, and asked them to pray for me. After they had prayed, I went down with Mr. Deruelle to a room occupied by two pious young men. I wrestled there with God that he would break my heart. I went home about twelve o'clock, and went to bed, but still was unwilling to come to the cross of my insulted Saviour.

On Christmas eve, in prayer-meeting, I first entertained a faint hope of his preciousness; yet it was not until last night after I had retired that I felt his presence so delightfully sweet. It appeared sometimes as if I was in his immediate presence. I could only lie and adore that unmerited mercy and grace which saved me from the dark abyss. I am weak and helpless, but the grace of God is sufficient for me. He is my Redeemer, my Elder Brother, my Friend. O to live near him, to be his through life, to go wherever he commands, to do whatever he wills, and when I have passed the gloomy vale leaning on his arm I may rise to join you and all his dear followers, in ascribing praise to him throughout an endless

eternity. O pray, dear parents, that he would strengthen me, and that I may never bring dishonor upon him or his cause. The influence of God's Spirit is extending over this village. I never saw such solemn assemblies. The arrows of God are piercing many a hard heart, and compelling them to cry for mercy. The revival here will shake the kingdom of darkness to its centre. Its influence will be felt over the world. But I must close this delightful theme. Give my love to all my Christian friends, and warn my impenitent companions to flee from the wrath to come. And O tell dear sister Anna to come to Christ. He is a precious Saviour. Tell her for my sake, for her soul's sake, for the sake of a crucified Jesus, to come now. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."

Farewell, and if we never meet again on earth may we meet around the throne of the Lamb, where we shall never, never part.

From your undutiful, but now,

I trust, repentant son,

JAMES M'GINNES.*

Such was the time of our beloved brother's espousals to Christ.

* Mr. M'Ginnes had no double name, and it was not until after he had graduated and removed to Steubenville, Ohio, that he assumed one. He there found another person of the same name, and in order to distinguish them, he chose the letter "Y," and ever after used it as one of the initials of his name.

In connexion with some thirty-five or forty others, mostly students, and some of them now ministers of the gospel, Mr. M'Ginnes united with the College church in Canonsburg some time in March, 1835, and continued consistent in his profession and faithful in the discharge of his Christian duties until, with his class, he graduated in the autumn of '35, and left the classic halls of Jefferson to enter, though not immediately, on the study of his profession—the blessed but self-denying work of the gospel ministry. As to the character of his religious experience, at this period, his room-mate writes: “His mind, at this time, was by no means constant in its apprehension of divine things. His feelings were fluctuating. Sometimes he was clear in the visions of his faith, and almost ecstatic in his joys. At other times he was in the valley of humiliation, mourning without the light of the sun; yet, always, with a trembling though tenacious faith would he say, ‘I know whom I have believed,’ and ‘though he slay me yet will I trust in him.’”

“His natural temperament being impulsive and sprightly, he was apt, at times, to be betrayed into those extremes of which his nature seemed to be so susceptible. Few persons were possessed of manners so affable, of qualities so social, and hence his society was courted, both before and after his conversion, by a variety of persons; and not unfrequently did his kindly and social spirit carry him along unconsciously into humorous and extravagant indulgences,

that in his retirement would occasion him seasons of extreme humiliation and regret. If he sometimes had clear and rapturous discoveries of the glory of his Immanuel, and of the companionships of his upper kingdom, he often had dark views of himself, and formed low estimates of the character of his piety and the service he rendered to his Saviour. Yet his hope was abiding; and, doubtless, from the height of glory whither he has ascended, he can contemplate, with an ecstasy of thanksgiving and satisfaction, the achievements of that grace that led him captive to the feet of Jesus, and taught and disciplined his immortal spirit, and guided his footsteps in the path of usefulness and virtue, until he was ripe for the rewards of immortality."

HIS SEMINARY LIFE.

AFTER graduating, which he did in the fall of 1835 with great acceptance to his preceptors, and with honor to himself—having been appointed to deliver, if we mistake not, the valedictory oration—he retired immediately, at the recommendation of Dr. Brown, to Steubenville, Ohio, where he undertook the department of languages in a classical academy; but before the year for which he had engaged had expired his health so entirely failed, in consequence of confinement and arduous labors, that he was constrained to relinquish the undertaking. This occurred in the spring of 1836.

During the summer following, he was part of the time under the care of his physician in his native village, and part of the time laboring as his strength admitted on his father's farm. His health having thus become much improved, he said one day to his parents that he would now study a profession. His father inquired what profession? He replied, "Father, I will study divinity." The choice was altogether voluntary, but it was just what his pious parents desired.

In the winter of 1836 and '37 having learned that his old college friend was in the Indiana Theological Seminary, he wrote to him, and receiving encouragement. He entered on the study of Theology in that institution in May or June of 1837. The same traits of character that marked his college career were exhibited during his theological course, but under the growing power and congenial themes of true religion, so that he regarded his residence at the Seminary as the most happy period of his previous life.

To a dear friend he now writes, "O there is a happiness in living to bless and benefit others that I had thought never could have been realized in this vale of tears. Let us so live that when death shall have closed our eyes, our memories may live not merely engraven on tablets of Parian marble, but written in characters of light and life upon the tablet of every heart—a monumental pillar that outlives the corrosion of time; then shall our lives

flow sweetly on, and our end shall be joyous and tranquil."

His vacations he always spent at home, laboring upon his father's farm. He assisted both in gathering in a harvest, and putting in the fall crop each year before returning to the Seminary. He thought that by spending his vacations thus, his constitution was strengthened, and his practical knowledge of farming increased, as well as considerable expense in hiring laborers saved his father, who was using every exertion, with limited means, to complete his education.

Upon his return to South Hanover in November, 1838, he reached Pittsburg late on Saturday night, cold and exhausted. The next morning he arose with renewed vigor, and purposing to remain during the day in the city, he says, "I sallied out after breakfast to witness the celebration of mass in the Catholic cathedral—a ceremony I had never before witnessed. The exterior of the building is grand and gloomy, of Gothic architecture—a style of building peculiar to Catholic countries during the supremacy of the Pope. But the interior was of a different order. As I entered the vestibule, a Catholic came running towards me with a small collection-box, but I passed without pretending to notice him, and was ushered into the cathedral itself.

"Never before did I witness such a spectacle. The scene was grand and imposing almost beyond belief; for up the long crowded aisles, and the richly car-

peted and festooned galleries might be seen the devoted followers of the 'Man of Sin' engaged in the peculiar exercises of the morning. Now the solemn, deep-toned organ pours forth its thrilling strains, and, as one man, the mighty assembled multitude bow their heads in silent adoration. Anon its rich music dies in sweet harmonious cadence upon the ear, and the low, sepulchral murmurings of prayer, like the far-off muttering of the thunder, arises from a thousand lips. Here the wretched penitent hoping to merit heaven by his mortifications, with measured stroke beats his breast until the sound reverberates. There the good Catholic, worthy of a saintship in the calendar, drops from her rosary the glassy bead at each repetition of an 'Ave Maria,' or a 'Pater Noster.' In the farthest recess of the cathedral, before the burnished crucifix, and the long, lighted, waxen tapers, stood the self-styled priest of God, as if in mockery of true religion, repeating his mummeries, and performing ceremonies the most ludicrous.

"Leaning against a pillar, I mused upon the scene before me. Various and multiplied were the reflections that passed through my mind. Memory carried me far back over the long track of history, and I thought of the fires Catholic persecution had lit up—and of the thousand martyrs who had sealed their testimony to the religion of the blessed Jesus with their blood. Here were the descendants of those fiendish spirits who had deluged Europe with Christian gore—of those who had driven my Protestant

ancestors from their home in sunny France, to seek, as refugees, in a foreign land, that protection which their own country had denied them. And did these possess the same ignorant, infuriated zeal in the unholy cause—the same burning, implacable hatred against us their descendants, and were they only restrained by the arm of the law? The secret of their heart is known but to Omniscience. God forbid that such rancorous hate should ever again characterize one, who bears the same stamp of humanity and immortality with ourselves.

“Natural was the transition from reflections such as these, to look into the dim shadowings of futurity. What were its prospects? Were the bloody scenes of the dark ages again to be re-enacted with twofold virulence upon a different stage? And was the world again to wonder after the beast and false prophet, and the gibbet and the stake again to exhibit heart-rending spectacles to the gaze of the taunting, persecuting multitude? Or, was a brighter era commencing, when the beast and the lying prophet should receive their reward, when the Jew shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentile, and when, with these same poor, blinded Catholics, I should unite in praising our common Redeemer?”

‘How long, dear Saviour, O how long,
Shall that bright hour delay?’”

The following covenant, expressive of his inner life while connected with his Saviour, is found among

his birth-day reflections of December 8th, 1838, which was solemnly renewed the succeeding year. "This day is the anniversary of my birth. Twenty-three years have rolled around, and been numbered with the past, since my eyes first saw the light. When I look back on the journey of life, how much cause have I for gratitude? The guardian eye of Providence has watched over me amidst the feebleness of infancy; directed and upheld the tottering footsteps of childhood; mercifully preserved me amidst the waywardness of youth; and has led me up to manhood. Oh, how rebellious have I been! How justly might God have cut me down as a cumberer of his ground, when by my flagrant impiety I dared high heaven to the stroke! But no; in long-suffering mercy he has borne with me, and instead of withering beneath his wrath he has called me, I trust, into the kingdom of his dear Son. Oh, the depths of the riches of the mercy and grace of God! that I should be made a subject of his grace—that I, who crucified the blessed Redeemer afresh and sinned against light and knowledge, should be pardoned, should be adopted into the family of God, and made a partaker of the privileges enjoyed by his children.

"Yet how little have I been influenced by these considerations! How neglectful I have been of duty! How unworthily have I walked in that high vocation, wherewith I have been called! O how often have I turned away from the reward of righteousness,

kindly offered through a Saviour's Cross, to the grovelling sensualities of earth—to the unsatisfying enjoyments of a guilty, transient world, as if they could fill an immortal mind, or satisfy its longing desires! And yet I am here—here in the land of the living and place of repentance—here, permitted to enjoy a name and place in his Church—here, with his blessed word in my hand, and his promises my trust—here, permitted not only to labor in his vineyard, but to look forward to a time, I trust not far distant, when, though the unworthiest of the unworthy, I shall occupy a more exalted station in the Church of God, and become to my dying fellow-men a minister of reconciliation.

“Delightful thought! that a worm should be so exalted; that He who is the Creator of the ends of the earth, should not only look with complacency upon the humble creature of his power, but should, with wondrous condescension, commission him as an ambassador from the high court of heaven, to proclaim peace and pardon to revolted rebels. Amazing grace!

“Lord, on the verge of this to me solemn and interesting day, let me consecrate myself anew to thee; that, if it is thy will that I shall be permitted to see another anniversary return, I may have more love to the Saviour burning within my heart,—with more of that humility which should become a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus,—with a growing hatred to sin, and an increasing desire after holiness, and conformity to the will of God,—and with an ardent

zeal for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

“If it is his will to spare me, may it ever be my earnest prayer, that the Lord would lift upon me the light of his approving countenance,—that as the past part of my life has sufficed to have wrought the will of the flesh, I may henceforth serve him in newness of life, devoting myself entirely to his service, and that he would fit me, by his providence and grace, for usefulness, and for discharging, with an eye single to his honor and glory, the arduous and important duties of a gospel minister, ever remembering that ‘they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.’”

The closing sentences of his next birthday reflections run thus: “Let the remembrance that so much of my time has gone to waste, that I am a year nearer the bar of God and the realities of eternity, add an increasing stimulus to urge me forward to a more active, zealous discharge of duty. May I not lose a precious moment, but may my time, my talents, my acquisitions, whatever I am or may have, be solemnly and conscientiously devoted to God. And may I be instrumental in his hand of doing some good.”

In consequence at one time of ill health, and at another, of being called away to take care of an afflicted friend, who had the misfortune to lose his reason, his studies at the Seminary were very mate-

rially interrupted. At length, however, after having spent about three years in the seminary, he completed his course, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Madison at a special meeting in South Hanover, on the 27th day of June, 1840.

His feelings in reference to the sacred office are thus expressed in a letter to a friend: "The responsibilities of that station in the Church of God, to which we are looking forward, are great and many. Let us then, in patience, possess our souls, and let it be our highest, holiest aspiration to be assimilated to Christ." Again he says: "Oh, what a glorious privilege to preach the gospel—to hold up a dying Saviour to the world!" Just before leaving the Seminary, and in view of his licensure, we have his sense of dependence upon God expressed. "I shall then," he writes, "stand upon the threshold of the world—the cold, calculating, selfish, ungodly world. It will all be before me where to choose my place of rest. But, blessed thought, Providence shall be my guide." Again, to an endeared friend, he writes: "Whatever my lot may be, I know not; but let our prayer be, that God would, in his providence, send us where we may be most useful in advancing his cause. For my part, I feel as if I could go to any place where I may be useful throughout this wide section of country. But wherever we roam, or wherever we rest, we will make the blessed God our portion; we will rest secure upon the bosom of our beloved Redeemer."

HIS LABORS IN THE WEST.

WHILE prosecuting his studies, Mr. M'Ginnes's mind was turned towards the great West, and thither he directed his steps immediately after his licensure. God, in his providence, had prepared a field for him. He went directly to Illinois, through the solicitations of his intimate friend, the Rev. S. C. M'Cune. He first visited Peoria, and was suddenly attacked there with the bilious fever, and confined for two weeks at the house of an old acquaintance. As soon as he recovered strength enough to travel, he visited the Presbyterian Church of Lewistown, the county seat of Fulton County, and having preached for that people a few Sabbaths, he received from them a call to become their pastor. Speaking of his first efforts at preaching, he says, "I preached four times in one week, rejoicing in heart that I was permitted, through riches of grace, to say something for the Saviour."

Feeling disposed to accept the call from this congregation, he soon returned to Pennsylvania, and on the 22d of October, 1840, he was married to Miss Elizabeth M. Criswell, of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, to whom he had been engaged for two years. In December, he returned to Illinois, and entered fully upon his labors at Lewistown. His efforts were always well received. He had crowded houses and attentive audiences. The town, during the terms of court, was often visited by strangers,—lawyers, and

others, who always attended the Presbyterian church, and the pastor's sermons were spoken of in the highest terms of admiration.

Often has he been heard to pray, after being told by some friend of the manner in which his sermons were spoken of, "Lord, keep me humble. Suffer me to hide behind thy cross, that thine own name may be exalted and not mine." And again, "Lord, keep me humble, and while I hold up a dying Saviour, may I be hidden from view behind his cross." He seemed to realize that truth, so important to be understood by every minister of the gospel, found in the diary of Robert Murray M'Cheyne, "I see a man cannot be a faithful minister, until he preaches Christ for Christ's sake—until he gives up striving to attract people to himself, and seeks only to attract them to Christ."

Like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, he was "in labors more abundant." His nervous, active temperament with his "heart's desire" to do good urged him on constantly to effort, until but little time was left for relaxation. The consequence was, that although his fertile mind was capable of furnishing the requisite amount of material, the physical labor necessary was often beyond the strength of his weak bodily frame.

Upon the Sabbath he usually preached twice during the day, and lectured at night. He gave a lecture also every Wednesday evening; and amidst all these pulpit duties he did not neglect pastoral visitation.

But he had not labored long thus, before he was attacked by disease. In the winter and spring of 1841, he suffered from the ague and fever—the prevailing sickness of that locality.

He did not, however, cease his labors, but continued to discharge his duties whenever it was possible, notwithstanding the entreaties of his people to spare himself or he would certainly break down. He would reply, with Cecil, “Better wear out, than rust out.” And again, “This is nothing more than *ague*, I will take a pulpit sweat and shake it off.” Herein he showed that spirit of restless activity and indomitable energy that ever characterized him in both health and sickness.

One Sabbath morning—the regular day for his chill,—feeling pretty well, and seeing a good congregation assembling at the church, he said that he would go; perhaps he would escape the chill that day. He went, and while he was going through the preliminary exercises, it was observed that he had a chill upon him. His wife hoped that he would go home immediately after prayer, knowing that when the fever would rise, as it would before he was done preaching, he would perhaps get flighty, as he often did when the fever was on him. She says, “I almost trembled when he laid aside his overcoat, and announced his text, which was, I think, Matt. 22 : 5, ‘But they made light of it.’” He proceeded, and finished his discourse without difficulty. After the benediction was pronounced, and he had descended

from the pulpit, he inquired of his wife, "Did I say anything wrong to-day?" She replied, "I think not." "Well," said he, "I have preached to-day under the excitement of a high fever." A gentleman who was standing by, remarked, "I was not aware, Mr. M'Ginnes, that you had any other than a *highly intellectual fever* to-day."

He was much prostrated after this for several days, but the chills were broken, and his health was gradually improved until August, when he had a severe attack of the diarrhœa, and was again reduced. Ever anxious, like his Divine Master, to "be about his Father's business," and hoping that his health might thereby be recruited also, he took one or two long journeys during that summer to preach the gospel in destitute places, "the regions beyond" his own charge. In this he resembled the Rev. Dr. Rodgers, the first Moderator of the General Assembly, who was distinguished for a liberal and active zeal in visiting destitute places, and not confining himself exclusively, as ministers are too apt to do, to his own highly-favored charge. Like Paul, also, he could say that he would not "boast in another man's line of things made ready to his hand."

In these journeys, Mr. M'Ginnes found, what every Western minister in his travels doubtless finds, and what should lead all the Eastern churches to be "moved with compassion," and to "devise liberal things" for their distant kindred and Christian brethren,—those who had the same faith, the same

Lord, and the same baptism, "scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd." He would often meet with Presbyterians who had emigrated from the older States, but who were deprived in their new homes of the precious privileges of the sanctuary. Not unfrequently would they shed tears of joy when they heard that he was a Presbyterian minister, who had come to preach to them the precious truth "as it is in Jesus;" for, like David, they could exclaim, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

The gratification our brother experienced in ministering the bread of life to these hungering souls was so great, and his anxiety to do good so intense, that he was often led to take such journeys, and to labor far beyond his strength. But he was thus to be taught the twofold character of the Christian's work on earth—that it is not only *to do* but also *to suffer* the will of God.

"Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,
And suffer all thy righteous will,
And to the end endure."

Paul asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me *to do*?" and the Lord soon afterwards said concerning him, "I will show him how great things he must *suffer* for my name's sake." Thus it was with Mr. M'Ginnes. With an absorbing desire to be active in the

vineyard of his Lord, he was often checked in his pious efforts by impaired health, if not prostrated upon a bed of dangerous illness. It has been well observed, however, that "The days, when a holy pastor, who knows the blood-sprinkled way to the Father, is laid aside, are probably as much a proof of the kindness of God to his flock, as days of health and activity. He is occupied, during this season of retirement, in discovering the plagues of his heart; and in going in, like Moses, to plead with God face to face for his flock, and for his own soul."

In consequence of feeble health, Mr. M'Ginnes was not in haste to have the pastoral relation constituted between him and the people of his choice. We find that he labored among them nearly a year before his ordination and installation services took place. We copy the following from a record made by himself: "I was ordained and set apart to the office of a bishop by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery of Peoria, Illinois, at their semi-annual session in Knoxville, Ill., September 4th, 1841. I was installed pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Lewistown, Ill., on Saturday, September 19th, 1841, by Samuel C. M'Cune and Robert Dobbins, a committee appointed by the Presbytery of Peoria for that purpose." Satisfactorily and permanently settled, as he now felt himself to be, over a beloved flock, he hoped that he might be long spared to go in and out among them, to lead them into the green pastures of the gospel, and beside the still waters of salvation.

But the Lord seeth not as man seeth. "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps."

In February, 1842, Mr. M'Ginnes and his intimate friend, the Rev. Mr. M'Cune of Canton, fifteen miles from Lewistown, had made arrangements to exchange pulpits on a following Sabbath. They accordingly met on Saturday at a half-way house, dined, and went to their respective places of labor. They preached on Sabbath, and on Monday morning Mr. M'Ginnes was suddenly taken ill. He immediately started for home, got as far as the place at which he dined on the Saturday previous, but was obliged to go to bed there for a while. Mr. M'Cune soon arrived, and finding his friend, by this time, somewhat better, he returned to Lewistown with him. His kind physician was soon by his side, and his disease was pronounced to be the bilious pleurisy. So aggravated was its character that it baffled all efforts to remove it for several days. His people, who were devotedly attached to him, felt the deepest anxiety about him, and called often to see him. His condition, however, was so precarious, that his physician thought it prudent to deny their admission to his sick-room.

But the trial was by far the greatest to his beloved wife. It appeared to her as if she must soon be bereaved of her dearest earthly object, and be left with an infant son in that land of strangers. On the next Sabbath prayer was offered in the church in his behalf. On Monday his esteemed friend came from

Canton to see him, and there was a slight change for the better. On Tuesday, as his friend was preparing to leave, he was desired to pray once more with the family. They kneeled around the bedside of the sick man, and earnest prayer was offered that all might be fully resigned to the will of God. When they arose from their knees, the meek sufferer, taking his beloved partner by the hand, said, "My dear E., are you resigned? Oh, it is

‘ Sweet to lie passive in his hands,
And know no will but his.’

That feeling is mine. I wish it was yours."

But God says through an inspired apostle, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." And again, by the mouth of one of his prophets, "Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." And all this is true, notwithstanding the worldling has but little faith in the power of prayer; or that the fatalist will contend that God is too great and too highly exalted, to interrupt any of his infinite and eternal arrangements, to answer requests in reference to the petty accidents of human life. God's purpose, however, to hear and to answer every prayer of faith, as will be most to his own glory, and most to the welfare of his chosen people, and to make all the arrangements of his providence concur in such answers, is just as eternal and unchangeable, as his purpose in reference to any other event, however great, in the wide world.

His people here prayed—

“ Restore him, sinking to the grave,
Stretch out thine arm, make haste to save;
Back to our hopes and wishes give,
And bid our friend, the pastor, live.”

And God was pleased to hear their fervent cries, and to bless the means used for the restoration of their sick pastor. That evening there was a decided change for the better, and from that time forward he continued to improve daily.

At the meeting of his Presbytery in April, which he was not yet able to attend, he was appointed a delegate to the General Assembly which was about to meet in Philadelphia. It was always painful for him to leave his congregation, even for a short time, but under the circumstances the path of duty was plain to him; he, therefore, speedily made arrangements to start with his family and visit friends and home on his way to the Assembly. On the Sabbath just before he left he preached an appropriate discourse from 2 Cor. xiii. 11: “Finally, brethren, farewell,” &c., which has not yet been forgotten. He visited home, attended the General Assembly, and returned to Illinois the following July.

While in Pennsylvania, many friends endeavored to dissuade him from going back to the West, inasmuch as he had already suffered so much there from bilious attacks. But he replied, “I am bound to that (Lewistown) church by a solemn vow, which must not be broken for a trivial cause;” and he hoped

that the Lord would restore his health and permit him to labor in that church of his first, his earliest love.

He now resumed his pastoral labors with increased earnestness and zeal, and for a year enjoyed tolerably good health. He did not labor without success: Zion prospered through his instrumentality; but his pious soul longed for an extensive work of grace among his people. In a letter to his father, dated May, 1843, he says, "I feel that in leaving my father's house and the home of my childhood, I am about my Master's business. And much as I love my parents and friends, I could not sacrifice duty to pleasure. Yea, this is my greatest pleasure, knowing that I have left behind me home, and all the endearments of parental kindness and paternal love, for the Saviour's sake. The Lord forbid that I should magnify my work, but I do magnify my office. And I trust that I have not altogether run in vain, neither labored in vain; 'yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me.' I rejoice to hear of the work of grace which is going on in some parts of the Eastern church. Has Shippensburg been revived? Can it be said of 'this man and of that man' that they have been born unto God there? It is a time of coldness with us here. The Church seems to be asleep. We want the breath of the almighty Spirit to breathe on these dry bones, or all will come to desolation. Pray for us, dear parents, that the word

of God may not be bound, but may prosper through our instrumentality.”

About this time his health again became feeble, and the warm weather had a very debilitating effect upon him. After preaching he would be quite prostrated, and sometimes was compelled to omit the afternoon service. He often lamented his want of health. He would say, “Oh, that I had strength to labor as I desire to do. The service of Christ is a blessed service. The spirit, indeed, is willing, but the flesh is weak. But God will accept according to that a man hath, and not require what he hath not. Our times are in his hand, and he will do with us as seemeth to him good.”

In September, as he was returning one evening from a pastoral visit, he was suddenly seized with cramp or bilious colic, and with difficulty reached home. His skilful physician made every effort to subdue the intense pain, but did not for several hours succeed, and then for some days it was followed by an intermittent fever, which, when checked, left him exceedingly weak. One day, after a conversation with the doctor and Mr. P., one of the elders, he said to his wife, “My dear E., something has been troubling me for several months, of which I dreaded to tell you. Three years ago I brought you here a stranger, with the prospect, if it were the will of God, of making the West our home for life. You have many friends here, to whom you are greatly attached, and in whose Christian society you find

much enjoyment. But it does seem to me as though I should regard this late attack as an admonition to seek a more congenial climate. What do you think about it? Does it send a pang to your heart?" She replied, "Oh no; whither thou goest I will go. Wherever you think your life may be prolonged, there let us go." "Well," said he, "those gentlemen who have just left coincide with me that the pure, invigorating air of our native state will suit my constitution best. We will then make preparation for returning home this fall, and it may be that in some nook or corner of the mountains of Pennsylvania, Providence will permit me to labor a little longer for his glory, and for the advancement of his kingdom on the earth." They accordingly made arrangements for moving, and in October they turned their backs upon the land of their adoption; and with many tears bade farewell to those dear friends in Lewistown who had become endeared to them by numberless kind offices, and by heartfelt sympathy in their afflictions during their sojourn among them. Mr. M'Ginnes's farewell sermon is said to have been a deeply affecting one.*

* The following tribute to his memory, from the pen of his physician, Dr. Rice, who is also a ruling elder, is in place here. He writes: "He was regarded by all as an able and devoted minister; he endeared himself to all with whom he became acquainted; and his church and congregation watched with great anxiety the effect of the climate on his constitution. Subject as he was to frequent and severe bilious attacks, which were induced by the peculiarity of this climate, they feared he would

His health gradually improved while upon their journey, and the following winter he spent among their friends. He was not disposed, however, to be idle, but frequently preached, and with great acceptance, too, as his health and opportunity permitted, for his ministerial brethren in the neighborhood, especially for the Rev. Mr. Harper, of Shippensburg, in whose congregation his father is a ruling elder, and for the Rev. Dr. M'Kinley, then of Chambersburg, and once he visited Danville, Pennsylvania.

HIS SETTLEMENT AT SHADE GAP.

A SHORT time after his return from the West, when his health had become tolerably good, his sister-in-law, Mrs. Brewster, wrote to him about the church at Shade Gap being vacant, and, inasmuch as he desired a location in a mountainous region, she had no doubt but what that place would suit him, as it

be obliged to remove to one more congenial to his constitution than this. And when he came to the conclusion that he must remove from the valley of the Mississippi, all were satisfied that such was his duty; yet, at the same time, this necessity was regarded as a mysterious dispensation of Providence, by which his charge and the country generally were to be deprived of the labors of one peculiarly adapted to this field.

“Although his stay with us was comparatively short, yet, when the time came that he must be separated from us, it was rendered certain that he had a hold upon the affections of his people which could not be sundered without a painful struggle, and nothing short of imperious necessity could have reconciled them to it.”

was a very healthy neighborhood. He recollected the place very well, having with his wife passed it a few days after their marriage. At that time, the little white church, one store, and a smith-shop, with one or two small houses, comprised the village of Shade Gap. After reading his sister-in-law's letter, urging him to visit this place as a candidate, he replied, "Is *thy* servant a dog that he should do this thing?" A sister, at whose house he made that reply, reminded him of it only the summer before his death, when he laughed heartily, said he remembered it well, and hoped that he had not disgraced the place.

In the spring of 1844 he moved with his family to Shippensburg. As the weather became warm, his dyspepsia, with which he was sorely troubled, became much worse. He dieted most rigidly, but without any apparent benefit. He looked very feeble, felt unfitted to engage in any mental exercise, and was, at times, owing to the state of his health and prospects, much depressed in mind. About this time, the Rev. James Harper, and the Rev. Wm. Chester, D.D., called to see him. After the usual salutations had been exchanged, Dr. Chester inquired, "And what doest thou here, Elijah?" Mr. M'Ginnes replied in a tone of regret, "Ah, my harp is unstrung; it is suspended upon the willows;" and then told how God had led him.

But the Doctor's question awakened a train of serious reflections. That evening, when Mr. M'Ginnes sat down to read, previous to his holding family

worship, he asked himself the same question, "And what doest thou here, Elijah?" and answered, "I am sure I had no desire to come here. If it had been the Lord's will, I could have lived, labored, and spent my days in the West. I think in coming here I was but following the leadings of his providence. Did he not say unto me, as to Jacob of old, 'Return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee?' It has often been a relief to my mind to think that I have not brought this upon myself, but have been pursuing the path God in his providence seemed to indicate. But, perhaps, I have done wrong. This question has aroused me. I know not but that if I make an effort to labor once more in the vineyard of the Lord, needed strength will be afforded." And in his prayer that night, at the family altar, he prayed most earnestly, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Show me the path of duty. Oh, that it may be made plain, and that I may have strength to pursue it."

Just at this time the congregation at Shade Gap, anxiously desiring a pastor, and hoping to be able to secure the services of Mr. M'Ginnes, extended to him a cordial invitation to visit them. In a letter addressed to him by the Session, urgently requesting his labors among them, they say, "You could hardly imagine the anxiety and wish the people here have for you to become their pastor." Another letter was now received from his sister-in-law, in which she again urged him to pay her a visit. Living a few

miles northwest of Shade Gap, in an adjoining congregation, she said, he might call at Shade Gap and leave an appointment, and preach there upon his return. Accordingly, a few Sabbaths after, we find him there in the pulpit of the old church. "His impressions upon the congregation at his first visit to the Shades," writes one of the Session, "were very favorable." Having preached two Sabbaths for that people, he received a unanimous call to become their pastor. He accepted it so far as to consent to supply their pulpit regularly, and commenced his labors there in October. Himself and family were received by that congregation with the greatest kindness; and he was much gratified and encouraged, in witnessing a growing interest upon the subject of religion and an enlarged attendance upon the means of grace.*

But he did not remain long there unnoticed and uncalled. He had been recommended as a suitable

* Previous to his going there the most of the congregation were in utter ignorance of the wants of the heathen world. The subject, probably, had seldom been mentioned by either of their former pastors. Mr. M'Ginnes, therefore, adopted the plan, at once, of holding the monthly concert of prayer upon the first Sabbath of each month immediately after sermon; and in addition to his own remarks he would often read suitable extracts from the *Missionary Chronicle*. The first collection that had ever been taken up in that church for missions was taken up on the first Sabbath of January, 1845. Mr. McGinnes had preached a missionary sermon from the words, "O Lord, revive thy work," and the collection amounted to \$17, which, considering all the circumstances, was thought to be very encouraging.

person to supply the vacant pulpit in the church at Danville, Pa., and in February, 1845, he received an invitation from the Session of that church to preach for them as a stated supply, with a view to a call as their pastor, in which they offered him more than double the salary he was to receive at Shade Gap, where he had not as yet been installed. He was afraid, however, that he would be subjected, at Danville, to the ague again, and he therefore felt it to be his duty to decline the invitation.

“According to the good pleasure” and “purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” the “beloved disciple” must be banished to the Isle of Patmos before he should be able to reveal to the Church the three grand periods of her future history. A dreary prison was the place assigned to John Bunyan in which to sketch his immortal Pilgrim. So our lamented brother must be removed from the wide mart of influence, from the crowded, bustling, thriving town, to serve God and the Church most effectively in the quiet, solitary retreat of Shade Gap; there to stamp his own name with imperishable honor, and to bless the world with the institutions of his own creative genius.

After laboring a year as stated supply for the people of Shade Gap, his health being somewhat improved, at the meeting of the Presbytery of Huntingdon, held in West Kishacoquillas, October 8th, 1845, he presented his letter of dismissal from the Presbytery of Peoria, and having been received by

the Presbytery of Huntingdon, he accepted the call from the "Little Aughwick Congregation," at Shade Gap, and was shortly afterwards installed pastor of that congregation by the Rev. Messrs. Jardine and Collins, a committee of Presbytery appointed for that purpose. He now took charge of this flock, "over the which the Holy Ghost had made him an overseer," with fresh determination to devote to it his best energies for its enlargement, edification, and consolation. And God permitted him richly to see that neither were his purposes nor efforts in vain. He shared largely in the affections and confidence of his people. His ministrations were well attended and highly acceptable, and a new impulse for good was imparted to the whole community.

IMPROVEMENTS—THE PARSONAGE—A NEW CHURCH—AN ACADEMY.

THE language of the prophet for the comforting of the Gentile church may here be used: "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited."

The day-star had already arisen upon the quiet village of Shade Gap. The morning had dawned. The streaks of light were following each other in

rapid succession, along the eastern horizon ; and the smiling sun was just about to arise in splendor. This retired spot was now to take rank among the more cheerful and favored portions of our beloved land. Science and literature, as well as religion, were in future to flourish here. Not only must there be an enlarged and a more commodious house of worship erected to meet the growing wants of Zion, and a convenient home secured for the comfort of the minister and his family ; but a literary institution also, of no inferior order, must arise, from which should constantly issue streams that would make glad the city of God—that would cause “ the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad for them, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

Our brother, with a heart of gratitude to God for special grace and mercy often bestowed, had no disposition to indulge himself in ease or luxury ; but if he had a moment of leisure time it was his purpose to employ it, with whatever talents God had given him, to the best advantage, as a good steward of the manifold grace of God.

“ During the winter of 1846,” says a correspondent, “ the practicability of establishing an academy was much talked of ; but a new church was desired in the first place, and also a parsonage.” As Mr. M'Ginnes and his family were without a shelter of their own, while there was a tolerable place of worship, the “ Parsonage” was the first thing that claimed attention. So David dwelled in his “ house

of cedar” before he made provision to build the Lord’s house, when the ark of God rested in the tabernacle only, or “within curtains.”

In the spring of 1847, Mr. M’Ginnes commenced to build the neat and convenient cottage in which his family still dwell. The lot upon which the building stands was a present from Mr. Blair, one of the ruling elders in that congregation. In a letter of Mr. M’Ginnes to the Rev. A. C. Hillman, dated February 5th, 1847, after speaking of the probability of the projected Central Railroad passing through Shade Gap, as that route had already been surveyed, and of his intention to build a house in the suburbs of the village, he says, “But you will, perhaps, say, it is foolish to build here, and live in this secluded spot, amidst the mountains, when you might secure a more eligible situation. *True*, but the reasons which have determined me on this course, are the following. 1st, The prospect of an increase in the population by the advantages of the projected railroad. 2d, My congregation are not willing to let me go, and therefore they have raised my salary somewhat. They have also promised to build a house for me, which is to be *my own property* without costing *me* very much, having already given the ground for a site, and subscribed liberally towards the erection of a house. Besides, I am doing good here, and immortal souls are as precious at Shade Gap as at any other place. And, if it pleases God, I would be as willing to go to *heaven* from this place,

surrounded by those saved by my instrumentality, as from the wealthiest church in the city. Fifty years hence, it will matter but little where we have been located, provided we have been found faithful, devoted and useful. And in all probability as long as I receive a competent support here, I will remain, for if God has sent me here, as I believe he has, no light matter will induce me to leave."

At the time the cottage was building, Mr. M'Ginnes lived a mile from the village. He often walked down twice a day to see the work; and the deep interest he felt in its progress, together with the direct effort he was himself required to make, were of very great benefit to his health. Often he would say, "This is the most effectual remedy I ever tried for dyspepsia. I find mine is vanishing." He was greatly assisted in his efforts by the congregation. Some furnished lumber; others lime, nails, and glass; while others again did the hauling. The mechanics labored at a lower rate than usual, and as his family boarded the workmen, they often received presents of provisions that were highly acceptable.

Mr. M'Ginnes was a firm believer in the doctrine of a special divine providence, for the supply of his temporal as well as of his spiritual wants. He knew that the God who fed Elijah at the brook Cherith, by the ravens, could as readily feed him and his; that he who makes all nature as well as every needed grace minister to the wants of his chosen, would never suffer him to want any good thing while he

put his trust in him. So he was taught to believe by the Psalmist, "O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." The following is an instance of his faith. One morning as he was about leaving home to visit the building, he said to his wife, "There will be an increased number of hands here to-day." She replied, that she was perplexed then to know how she should prepare a dinner for them, as she was in want of some necessary articles. He, smiling, said, "Be not faithless, but believing. The Lord will provide;" and thus left her apparently "doubting nothing." And so it was, for while his wife was taxing her ingenuity to prepare a meal of such things as she had, two ladies of the congregation came to visit them, and brought the very articles that were so much needed. When Mr. M'Ginnes returned home (the dinner was always carried to the workmen) he said "Well, Eliza, you thought that you would have but a spare dinner to-day for your workmen, but you had a great abundance." His wife then told him how it had been furnished. He replied, "Well, does not that serve to strengthen your faith?"

The building went up rapidly, and in the following October the trusting, grateful, and happy family were permitted to move into it. A few sabbaths be-

fore they moved, as they were returning from church, while passing and looking at the building, almost ready for their reception, Mr. M'Ginnes inquired of his wife what she was thinking about. He said he wished to contrast their thoughts. She replied, that just then she was thinking of those two lines of the 102d Psalm which they had sung at church—

“Those ruins shall be built again,
And all that dust shall rise.”

He remarked how very different his thoughts were. The words, “Arise ye, and depart hence, for this is not your rest,” he said, were sounding in his ears. “Well,” continued he, “if in the abundant mercy of God we are permitted to enter our new dwelling, we will take God with us. Let it be our resolution, that as for us and our house we will serve the Lord. Who knows but that this may be the place from which we shall be summoned to ascend to the mount of God.”

But although our brother was in a retired spot, as already intimated, he was known abroad. “He could not be hid.” Scarcely had he entered his new home before he was again beckoned away. That very month, if not the very week, that he took possession of the Parsonage, a letter was addressed to him from an inviting congregation in the Carlisle Presbytery, desiring his labors among them as a candidate for settlement. The Presbyterian pulpit at Greencastle was now vacant by the resignation of

the Rev. T. V. Moore. And as Mr. M'Ginnes had been favorably recommended to them, and a strong desire manifested on the part of many to hear him preach, when that pulpit was before vacant, so that desire now became general when the pulpit was again vacant. Accordingly, a letter was addressed to him in October, informing him of the fact; and a speedy answer not being received, a second letter was addressed to his father, urging him to make inquiry upon the subject, at the same time, stating the high estimation in which his son was held. But Mr. M'Ginnes could not see his way clear to accept the invitation.

A few months later he received another call. So great reputation had he earned during his brief sojourn in Illinois, that his fame had spread abroad in all that country. In a letter dated March 4th, 1848, the Session of the Presbyterian Church of Peoria, one of the most prominent situations in the State, extended to him a warm invitation to visit their vacant pulpit. But he felt it to be his duty to decline this invitation also.

Settled, therefore, in his own new home, we find his active and benevolent soul devising "liberal things" for the Lord. His previous anxiety for a new house of religious worship now returned with increased longings. He could not rest satisfied to dwell in his "ceiled" house, while the house of the Lord lay "waste." He, therefore, aided by a willing and zealous people, whose "spirit the Lord stirred

up," set to work earnestly to build the Lord's house, that he might "take pleasure in it" and "be glorified" thereby. The cheering result was that, in the following summer, a well-proportioned and very comfortable brick church was dedicated to the service of Almighty God, and a classical school was immediately after started in the old church building. Thus were the three grand objects desired,—a parsonage, a new church, and an academy, well-nigh secured.

But amidst all these improvements our brother was not to be left uncalled. He must amidst trials known only to himself and his family, as well as amidst much outward success, settle another question in casuistry, and one of even more difficulty, from both its greater responsibility and encouragement than any that had preceded it.

In consequence of the Rev. L. W. Green, D.D., having accepted a call to the presidency of Hampden Sidney College, Virginia, the pulpit of the second Presbyterian Church at Baltimore became vacant, and Mr. M'Ginnes was thought to be a very suitable man to fill the vacancy. Accordingly, in November, 1848, a letter from that congregation was forwarded him asking whether he would be willing to preach one or two Sabbaths for them as a candidate. And an immediate reply not being received, as in the case of Greencastle, another letter was addressed to his father, making inquiries about his son, and expressing the high regard they had for him. But he was compelled to decide this question, as he had done similar

previous ones, in the negative. The difficulty of so deciding will appear evident when we understand the circumstances under which the decision was made.

The amount of salary promised Mr. M'Ginnes at Shade Gap was \$300 per year, with the expectation of receiving \$100 additional from the Board of Missions. He also had liberty to preach occasionally at Fort Littleton, about twelve miles distant. He, however, seldom spent a whole Sabbath there, but would preach once a month on a Sabbath afternoon in the summer, and at night in the winter. The people there made up a small sum, of about \$20 for his support. He received, without opposition, the first two years of his labors at Shade Gap, the \$100 that was expected from the Board of Missions; but the third year there were some objections made by the Presbytery to this amount being continued, inasmuch as the Board was embarrassed for want of funds, and as it was thought that the church at Shade Gap should now sustain itself. Mr. M'Ginnes, however, plead hard for it, and the \$100 was granted. But the next year, the Presbytery refused to ask any appropriation from the Board for him. He arose and said to his brethren that if they were unwilling to petition the Board in his behalf he should feel it to be his duty to resign his charge as soon as he reached home. And after reconsidering the matter, Presbytery agreed to ask an appropriation of \$75 for him that year.

He did not, it is believed, again desire aid from the Board, for he resolved in the providence of God, if possible, after this to sustain himself; and his prospects in this respect, as we shall see in the sequel, were destined to brighten. But one of the administrators of his property, who is well acquainted with this whole matter, says he is confident that Mr. M'Ginnes never, during the four years, received more than \$250 per year from his congregation, and that mostly in produce, so that the money he received from the Board was very nearly all that he handled.

Now let it be remembered, that it was just at the commencement of his fourth year of labor at Shade Gap, and just after he had struggled so hard in Presbytery to have a mere pittance added to his salary, that he might be enabled to keep his growing family from want, that he received the invitation from the Second Church at Baltimore, where a salary of \$1800 was offered; and who would have thought otherwise than that he would answer in the affirmative—yet he sends a negative reply.

When he received this invitation, in view of their present limited circumstances, his wife said to him, "That is a temptation." "Yes," said he, "and for your sake I would be tempted to go there, or somewhere else, where you would not be subjected to so many privations as we must ever expect here; but then this poor, frail tenement would soon break down under the arduous labors of a city pastor." Their relatives and friends were very kind to them,

but in order to meet all their increasing liabilities they were required to exercise the most rigid economy. Mr. M'Ginnes often remarked, "Our only luxury is contented minds and the prospect of usefulness in the sphere in which our lot is cast."

MILNWOOD ACADEMY.

UNDER the fostering care, popular manners, and energetic control of Mr. M'Ginnes, the little classical school soon increased in numbers, character, and influence.

It started in the fall of 1848, in the old church, with two students, which was the entire number taught for nearly three weeks; but before the session closed there were twenty-two in attendance, nine of whom were boarders. The second term there were about forty, and the third term there were upwards of fifty, and in this proportion they continued to increase until the number reached eighty.

A more suitable school-room than the one at first occupied, and a building to accommodate boarders also, soon appeared to be necessary. Accordingly, to answer both these purposes, Mr. M'Ginnes secured by a company of stockholders, in 1849, the erection of a large stone building, and gave it the name of "The Milnwood Academy." The part occupied as a school-room had desks in it sufficient to accommodate about forty students, but as the session advanced they had

to get a new desk made every few days, so that before that session closed Mr. M'Ginnes found he would have, as he said, "to enlarge the borders of his tent." He must either build a new school-room and make preparation to accommodate all that would come, or he must announce to the public that he could only take a limited number. He resolved upon the former course, and with considerable effort, in 1850, a large and convenient "recitation-room," 54 feet long and 36 feet wide, was built; and the former building was used exclusively as a boarding-house. Still, encouraged from the number of enthusiastic and admiring youth that crowded around him, in 1851 he was under the necessity of putting up still another building to accommodate them with suitable sleeping apartments.

So much had he been encouraged from the beginning, that he felt himself under the necessity not only of increasing the number of suitable buildings, but also, of enlarging the number of good instructors; having from the first associated with him his brother, John Henry Wilson, and afterwards, as occasion required, having secured the services of Mr. S. Campbell and Messrs. D. M'Kinney and R. H. Morrow, both of the latter being regularly graduated at Jefferson College; and had our brother's life been spared he had serious thoughts of enrolling "Milnwood Academy" among the worthy colleges of our land.

It is truly astonishing to see how, through the influence of this one man, such a change had been wrought

in the whole appearance and prospects of Shade Gap in so short a time; and how a literary institution, from such a small beginning, should so soon rise to such commanding greatness; and that, too, while at the same time its founder was faithfully engaged in the discharge of pastoral duties sufficient to occupy any common man's time. An intelligent gentleman remarked to the author that the character, property, and prospects of Shade Gap had advanced, during the brief sojourn of Mr. M'Ginnes there, as much as, if not more than, they would have done, in ordinary circumstances, in fifteen or twenty years.

The following is one expression of public opinion, out of many given, in regard to the location and value of Milnwood Academy. It is extracted from a cheering account given of the first exhibition in that institution, by a correspondent of the *Huntingdon Journal*, under date of September 18th, 1849. He says: "Through your valuable paper, I write to inform its many readers of an institution which has lately sprung up in our county, and one of which the county can be justly proud,—Milnwood Academy, in Dublin Township. It is located at the base of Shade Mountain, in the beautiful valley of Tuscarora, whose elevation is so high and the air so pure, that chills and fevers are unknown to any of the inhabitants in the vicinity of this young institution of learning. The people, too, of that portion of our county which surrounds Milnwood are a church-going people; are industrious and hospitable; and

possessing a high moral tone they will compare well with the citizens of any other part of the county. Such are the people with which the youth instructed in this institution will have to associate. The Academy is conducted by the Rev. J. Y. M'Ginnes, who is bland and courteous in his deportment, possesses indomitable energy, and is one of the most eloquent and learned preachers belonging to the Presbyterian Church. The Professor J. H. W. M'Ginnes is learned, dignified, and courteous. Under such instructors, parents and guardians may expect a high degree of mental and moral training. In this I feel they will not be disappointed."

But the ministerial and pastoral responsibilities of Mr. M'Ginnes increased as well as his academical labors.

In October, 1849, the Rev. George Gray, through age and infirmity, resigned his pastoral charge of the Upper Tuscarora Congregation, about twelve miles distant from Shade Gap. The people of that charge immediately desired Mr. M'Ginnes to labor there the one-half of his time, and they subscribed towards his support \$225 per year. He acceded to their request for one year, his own people reluctantly giving their assent, and some of them even spoke of reducing their own subscriptions one-half in consequence. To this he objected. He said that his personal and family expenses were constantly increasing, and that if his people did so reduce their subscriptions he could not live among them. And Brice Blair, Esq.,

one of the administrators, says that the books have shown that he did not receive more than \$350 from both churches that year—commencing October, 1849, and ending October, 1850.

Just here there came another letter from abroad, to interrupt his home thoughts and efforts, and if possible to call him hence.

The Presbyterian church at Wooster, Ohio, is destitute of the labors of a pastor, and a letter dated November 30th, 1849, assures him of the fact, and states moreover that he has been recommended as a man whose talents would suit them. Wooster is described as being in the heart of a fine country, is said to be a healthy place, a growing town, to possess an intelligent community, and to embrace a large number of Pennsylvanians. The church, it is stated, offers a very competent salary; and there is, especially, a large field of ministerial usefulness, and the prospect of doing much for the glory of God.

But all these considerations did not seem sufficient to induce the least wavering in his mind about changing his field of labor. It was not the will of his heavenly Father that he should be placed upon one of the high towers of Zion. A more humble post seemed to be assigned him, yet one not less effective; for here he would gather, as it were into a bright and burning focus, rays that would warm and bless multitudes far away. He was here developing intellectual and moral energy, that would be felt tenfold more upon the broad field of the world, than any such energy he

could himself impart to the best congregation in our land: and this is just what he said to his wife when he received the invitation from the church at Wooster. He then remarked that he thought he might be as useful, if not more so, where he was, raising up men to labor in the West where he could not, than to be settled in the best congregation in Ohio. He has also been heard to say when solicited to leave Shade Gap, that he never wished to leave there until he could leave that congregation in such a state, that they would have no difficulty in getting a pastor, and then he would go to some destitute field, for he did not wish to build on any other man's foundation.

At the close of his first year of labor in the Upper Tuscarora congregation he desired to cease his labors there; but the people urged him so strongly to give them one-third of his time, if he could give them no more, promising to contribute for his support the same they had done before, that he consented to do so for another year, if, in the mean time, they would endeavor to get a pastor. He felt confident that all his own time was demanded, and that all his energies might very readily be exhausted at Shade Gap.

Mr. M'Ginnes's settlement at Shade Gap, was for the sake of neither worldly gain nor honor; but because of the providence of God pointing out plainly the path of duty. And Milnwood Academy was not founded from any inferior motive; but, in faith and prayer, that it might advance the cause of sound education, and be instrumental in training up some

beloved youth for the sacred ministry; and God has set his seal of approbation to the motive in both cases, by crowning the labors of his servant with abundant success.

In October, 1850, during the interval of school, Mr. M'Ginnes held a communion season at Shade Gap, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Hughes. The meeting was an interesting one. On the Sabbath following, Mr. M'Ginnes was absent fulfilling a regular appointment at the Lower Church; a prayer meeting was held at the Academy, and but seven persons attended. When Mr. M'Ginnes returned and learned the fact, he felt exceedingly grieved, and mentioned it in the church the next time he preached there. He lamented that so many who had just been at the Lord's table, could so readily absent themselves from the prayer meeting, which, he said, was the pulse of the Church, and it showed them to be in a sad, sad state indeed. He then urged professing Christians to pray for the reviving influence of God's Spirit, to descend upon them. A few Sabbaths afterward he preached from the words, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die," Rev. iii. 2, and from that time he was importunate in his prayers both in the church and in the family for a revival of true religion. With great earnestness did he plead with God: "Hast thou not a blessing in store for us, O our Father?"

During that winter he was much gratified in witnessing a growing seriousness among some of the

young men of the Academy ; and, at their next communion season, which occurred in March, 1851, this seriousness was very manifest. The Lord God had now evidently come down to dwell among them. The Rev. David Sterrett, an evangelical and pungent preacher, was assisting at these services. As the meetings progressed religious feeling deepened, until tears were seen to flow, and sobs became audible.

Mr. Sterrett left on Tuesday morning. An inquiry-meeting was held that day in Mr. M'Ginnes's study. Five of the young men came out of the school and followed him to his study, to be conversed and prayed with. On the next day, at the same hour, the number was doubled, and at night there was a still larger number. On Thursday, Mr. M'Ginnes had his parlor opened, and at the hour appointed about thirty persons, all of whom, except one, were students, assembled as anxious inquirers after salvation. At one of these meetings, taking each student by the hand, he said, "Oh, boys, you could do nothing that would give me more pleasure, than by thus showing your anxiety about your souls' salvation !"

"It was truly a solemn time," writes Mrs. M'Ginnes. "When my dear James came out, after the meeting was dismissed, he blessed God that some of them were cherishing a hope in Christ. He spoke of the momentous responsibility of the situation in which he was placed, fearing lest some word he should drop might give a downward tendency to

some precious soul. He also said that his strength was failing from excessive fatigue, and he hoped that Brother Hawes would come to his aid." His wife replied, "My dear husband, the Lord will direct you and strengthen you." "Yes," said he, "he is doing it. Oh! I would not exchange the happiness of this hour for the whole universe! The results of this meeting will not be fully known until that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest."

That night, as they were preparing to retire, a noise was heard as if some one were in distress, but, upon going to the door, it was discovered to be the voice of earnest prayer echoing from the mountainsides. "Oh!" said Mr. M'Ginnes, "there is my encouragement! Is not that the sweetest of earthly sounds?" The voice was one well known, and for several successive evenings, at the same hour, it echoed from the same hallowed spot. "Let us pray," said Mr. M'Ginnes, "that these may be but the mercy-drops which precede the approaching shower. I trust the good influence will extend throughout this whole congregation and community. How many baptized youth are there here whom I should rejoice to see becoming sharers in this glorious work of grace. I have labored in revivals of religion before, both with pleasure and profit, but, oh! this is soul-cheering, to have one here in this part of God's heritage, over which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer. And those dear young

men, oh! I hope that many of them will become chosen vessels, set apart for the work of the ministry. Indeed, I feel assured that such will be the case; and what human mind can calculate the amount of influence they may wield? It will *tell* upon the world—it will *tell* in eternity. Not unto us—not unto us, but to thy name, blessed Redeemer, be all the glory. It is honor—glory enough for us, to be the instruments of accomplishing so good a work,—to be the rod in the hands of the prophet by which the flinty rock has been smitten. How thankful am I that Brother Sterrett was able to come at this time. It would seem as if a blessing attended his preaching wherever he goes. The Holy Spirit is now evidently with us to bless our labors, and oh, that he may continue with us, for if we should grieve him away from our midst, then ‘all will come to desolation.’ ”

What was said of the Rev. Mr. M'Cheyne in regard to the Rev. Mr. Burns's successful ministrations in *his* charge during his absence to the land of Israel, can as truly be said of Mr. M'Ginnes in reference to the above interesting season in his own charge. “He had no envy at another instrument having been so honored, in the place where he himself had labored with many tears and temptations. In true Christian magnanimity he rejoiced that the work of the Lord was done by whatever hand.” He could say with Moses, “Send by whom thou wilt send.”

“At the close of that session of school,” writes

one of the students, "which will be ever remembered on account of the unusual degree of religious feeling manifested, Mr. M'Ginnes called us into the school-room for the purpose of giving us his parting advice. He exhorted us to be his living epistles, known and read of all men; and urged us not to let the good impressions which we had received wear away, but to continue steadfast unto the end, so that, at the day of judgment, he might be enabled to say, 'Here, Lord, am I, and those whom thou hast given me.'"

Since his death, it has been ascertained that sixteen young men were at that time hopefully converted to God, and eight of that number are looking forward to the work of the gospel ministry. It is also known that four other persons, previous to this time, who were prosecuting their studies in the Academy, were led by his influence, under Providence, to study for the ministry. Some of these, it is hoped, will become "burning and shining lights" upon the walls of Zion, as was the case with Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Calvin, who were all led to become "ambassadors for Christ," by the urgency of God's ministers and people.

Mr. M'Ginnes's example is a noble one for imitation. "Go and do thou likewise." "They that turn many to righteousness," either immediately by their own personal application, or mediately through efforts made to raise up a living ministry, to exert a healthful influence upon others, "shall shine as the stars for ever and ever."

In a letter addressed to him, but which he did not live to peruse, dated Fairfield, Jefferson County, Iowa, September 2d, 1851, the Rev. Mr. M'Cune appropriately says, "We are beginning now to see some of the designs of our superintending Father, in keeping you among the mountains, instead of calling you to blow the trumpet at Peoria, and in the coasts thereof;" and again, "If it had been the Master's adorable will, many, as well as myself, would have rejoiced in enjoying your presence and labors in this field, which is itself a world; but who knows that He is not employing you there, in a comparatively unknown nook of this world, to originate and manage agencies that will ultimately wield a mighty influence on the religious destinies of this infant sister state. God grant that it may be so! And what a thrilling retrospect you may enjoy from the judgment bar, and the home of the redeemed!"

Mr. M'Ginnes's last work in behalf of "Milnwood Academy," was the preparing of a catalogue of its teachers and students, which he completed and sent to be printed on the last Monday of his life.

HIS LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH.

THE summer session of Milnwood Academy now opens, and it is to be one that will never be forgotten by the inhabitants of Shade Gap, or by that youthful, interesting band gathered together in those halls of science and religion. It will ever be one of sorrow-

ful and yet of joyful memory. "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?" might here have been asked the pupils of Milnwood Academy, as it was asked Elisha of old. It was to be even so, but they did not, like Elisha, know it, though they might have conjectured and feared it, from their beloved principal's unceasing activity, his excessive labors, and his wasting physical strength.

The Academy went on "swimmingly," as he wrote on a former occasion, to his intimate friend, the Rev. Mr. M'Cune. The third new building, already alluded to, was now in process of erection, to accommodate the large number of students who had flocked to him from every quarter. The last session that was to share in his faithful oversight, paternal affection, and importunate prayers, started with brighter hopes than any that had preceded it. His ardent desire had been granted in his being permitted to see the work of the Lord revived in their midst; his beloved Academy sharing in the blessed influences of it; and, as the glorious result, a number of the precious youth devoting themselves to the ministry of God's dear Son.

And the Academy, in other respects, was very flourishing; its temporal interests were highly prosperous. Blessed, therefore, beyond any former time, both in his church and in his Academy, both in temporal and in spiritual things, it is not to be wondered at that he enters upon the new session with the most

buoyant anticipations of accomplishing more for God and for his fellow-men, than he had ever done before. So his "heart was fixed." But God designs that his people shall glorify him, not only actively, but passively, in their death as well as in their life. And He himself will ever wisely direct as to how his glory shall be most effectually promoted.

Amidst the full return of old students and the large increase of new ones at the beginning of this term, the solemnity of the precious season that had just passed was not forgotten. But while it had a tranquillizing and hallowed influence on all hearts, the former students seemed to enter upon their duties with the expectation that this would be to them a better session than any they had ever spent there before. Such, no doubt, was the case, but how different were the providences of God from what they anticipated. But so man is always disappointed when he builds upon the uncertainties of time. God says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

This was to be a session in which long-cherished hopes would be blighted, warm affections buried, and Ichabod written by many upon those once loved seats of learning. It was to be a time of darkness, death, and of the most heartfelt sadness; "a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains."

In the month of May, an annual orator, according

to custom, was desired to address the Philo and Franklin Literary Societies of Jefferson College, Pennsylvania, at their approaching commencement, on August 5th, 1851. Among other names, that of the Rev. James M'Ginnes was proposed, and the character he had already earned for himself, and the estimation in which he was held at his early age, may be easily gathered from the fact that he was elected almost unanimously, he receiving forty-eight votes, and the opposing candidate, the Rev. N. L. Rice, D.D., of Cincinnati, but five votes. His election, under such circumstances, was certainly very flattering.

A few Sabbaths before he left for Canonsburg, he preached from Hebrews xii. 12, 13, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down," &c. As his wife was prevented from attending church that day, he thought she might be both gratified and profited by a perusal of his sermon, and be also an instrument of good to others; so he handed her his sermon to read, and then desired her to take it over and read it to Mrs. F——, an estimable Christian lady, who was just recovering from a dangerous illness, and whose spirits were much depressed. His wife said, "Perhaps she will think me a Sabbath visiter." "No," said he, "tell her I have sent you to preach to her, whilst I go across the valley." When he returned, he inquired of his wife how she had succeeded with the sermon? She replied, "Very well; and that the lady had sent him many thanks for affording her an

opportunity of hearing a sermon so suitable to her case."

"Well," said he, "I knew that she would appreciate my motive in sending you." And thus he tried to have a good word of the gospel for every one, being "instant in season and out of season," embracing opportunities of doing good when offered, and seeking them out when not presented, "that he might by all means, save some."

On Tuesday, previous to his going to Canonsburg, he had an attack of cholera morbus, and kept his bed until evening. On Wednesday he was much engaged all day, and looked care-worn and feeble; but, as usual, was cheerful. At one time coming into the house, he said to his wife, "Why so sombre, eh, dear?" and then rallied her about wearing a long face. She replied that she thought him very unfit to travel in his present state of health; that she was afraid he would be sick by the way. "There," said he, "you are borrowing trouble. You must not anticipate evil; 'sufficient unto the day, is the evil thereof.' It is true, I am weak, *very weak* to-day, but you know that journeying always improves my health; and I anticipate also a great deal of pleasure from a visit to Canonsburg. I have hosts of friends to welcome me there, and it will do me good to traverse the old walks once more; and see those old familiar faces."

His wife strove that evening to be cheerful, but the next day when he was about to leave, she found

that he partook of her sad feelings; still he endeavored to keep up her spirits. He said that he could not account for her depression, as he had often taken longer journeys, and been absent longer than he expected to be at this time. Then in prayer, he committed himself, his wife and children, to God, and prayed that he might be permitted to return and bless his household. He desired his wife to write to him by the next mail, then took his leave of them all, and, it being noon, went immediately over to the Academy.

All the students accompanied him to the coach, and as he took his seat they heartily cheered him, in view of the distinguished honor that had been conferred upon him, by the literary societies of Jefferson College, to which he replied,

“Honor and shame from no condition rise,
Act well your parts, and there the honor lies.”

He reached Canonsburg in safety, and was delighted to receive the cordial welcome of so many warm hearts, and to participate in the social and literary festivities of the occasion.

The 5th of August was a “high day” at Jefferson College, embodying a rich “feast of reason and flow of soul.” Mr. M’Ginnes acquitted himself well in the discharge of his own duties. His address, though prepared amidst much bodily infirmity, and under a pressure of both pastoral and academic labors, gave general satisfaction. “It was listened to,” said one of the auditors, “with profound interest.” The Rev. Dr. Brown, the President of the

College, writes, "His address was received with great and universal favor." His subject was, "The Spirit of the Covenanters." As Jefferson College is located in the midst of many Covenanters and Seceders of intelligence and sterling moral character, who have ever manifested a deep interest in the institution, the subject was a very timely one, and particularly acceptable to a large portion of the audience. It was handled with Mr. M'Ginnes's usual eloquence of diction, fervency of spirit, and energy of delivery, and exhibits no little thought and research. On the day following, he received the congratulations of several of his ministerial brethren, on the happy choice and treatment of his subject.

But now, farewell, ye classic halls, ye rural scenes, ye sacred retreats, ye honored ones, ye long-cherished friends, for ever farewell!

Mr. M'Ginnes's work at Canonsburg being done, his last act of love and good will to his "Alma Mater" being completed, he hastened homeward. He was absent ten days. He reached home on Saturday evening, but a poisoned arrow had winged its way to his heart. He had felt symptoms of dysentery on the Thursday preceding, when in Pittsburg, and had procured and taken, alternately, some rhubarb and opium to alleviate his pain.

When he took the cars at Johnstown, his pain was so great that he thought he would be obliged to stop there. "But then," said he to his wife afterwards, "I thought of my own happy home, and of your dis-

appointment, if I did not come. And the desire to reach home was so great that it nerved me for the effort, and I came on, although I had several paroxysms of most severe pain between this and the river.”

His worthy physician was immediately sent for, and under providence, succeeded in checking the disease on Sabbath afternoon. A great many persons having met for church that day called to see him. He expressed his regret that he was not able to preach the gospel to them; and to a number he said that he was thankful that God had permitted him to return home to be sick. Thus was the very first Sabbath after his return, for which both himself and his people had longed, as about to be one of mutual interest, marked with disappointment and sorrow, ominous only of still deeper gloom.

But for wise ends the sovereign Jehovah, in the execution of his unalterable decrees, often disappoints the expectations of his short-sighted and erring creatures. “A man’s heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps.” His love, however, can no more fail his people, than his wisdom can err in the appointment of their lot; so that blessed at all times are they who put their trust in him.

Once, when Mr. M’Ginnes thought that he was alone, he said, “Oh, let me die among my kindred.” On Monday he was better, and whilst his wife was sitting by his bedside, he felt much disposed to talk over past occurrences. He spoke of the way in which Providence had led them since their first ac-

quaintance. "Surely," said he, "we have abundant cause for gratitude to God for all his goodness towards us. But how unworthy are we of the least of those mercies. Like Jacob of old, with our staff we passed over this Jordan (meaning the time of their marriage); but now we have become, not two bands, such as Jacob had, for they were separate bands, but five bands (referring to their children), to bind us more closely together. Like Jacob, too, then we had not a spot which we could call our own; now, in the good providence of God, we have a comfortable habitation and all the necessaries of life, with 'contented minds, which are a continual feast.'"

He then spoke of the Academy and its surrounding buildings, and remarked that those lines of the 102d Psalm, which Mrs. M'Ginnes had quoted, as they passed along there before moving, were prophetic. "If the dust," continued he, "is not rising, the stones and mortar are;" and then added, "Persons who have been born in the lap of ease cannot enter into the feelings of those who find themselves advanced without any designs formed by their friends, or expectations indulged in by themselves. Let us ever cherish Jacob's disposition, and be thankful to God who hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

His health continued to improve gradually, and on Wednesday he was again, for part of the day, in the school.

Doctor Shade, his family physician, writes, "Dur-

ing my acquaintance with Mr. M'Ginnes, his bad health was mostly referable to a functional derangement of the liver, attributed by him to frequent obstinate bilious attacks, under which he had labored while in Illinois. His nervous system was severely implicated. In the latter part of June, or the early part of July, preceding his death, he was attacked by violent diarrhœa, which under treatment appeared to yield, but recurred from time to time with considerable intensity, so much so that he was advised to abandon the hope of visiting Canonsburg in August, as he contemplated doing. But about this time his disease put on a flattering aspect, and giving him thereby a few days of immunity from suffering in which to prepare his address for the College, he embraced the opportunity. After having made preparation, although his symptoms had grown worse, he started for Canonsburg, and immediately plunged into the exciting scenes of a college commencement, which, although they served to sustain him for the moment by their stimulus, were followed by fearful reaction. He returned home with his disease aggravated twofold, having, as he informed me, suffered more or less from it during his whole absence. In a few days, however, rest and medical treatment were successful again in ameliorating his disease, but it was only an amelioration. His diarrhœa still continued, alternating occasionally with severe constipation, not however sufficiently aggravated to keep him confined. On the contrary, he was actively en-

gaged in his usual duties until a few days previous to his death."

The Sabbath following he was able to preach to his people, and during that week Professor Williams, of Jefferson College, arrived at Shade Gap, with the intention of delivering, by request, a course of lectures on the Natural Sciences, to the students of Milnwood Academy. As the Professor lectured every evening, Mr. M'Ginnes, although suffering with a lingering pain, exerted himself to have the students attend and improve those lectures, in which he was himself deeply interested.

On Sabbath, August 24th, which was his last Sabbath on earth, he attended the Sabbath-school and the Bible class before the hour for public service had arrived, and afterwards preached an impressive discourse from 2 Cor. xii. 10, "When I am weak, then am I strong." Professor Williams spoke in high terms of this sermon. Said another, in reference to it, immediately after its delivery, "It seemed to me as if Mr. M'Ginnes would ascend from there—the pulpit—to heaven;" and Mr. M'Ginnes was heard to say, "Oh! I felt in the spirit of preaching that day! This poor body of flesh and blood was weak and tottering, but I was strong in spirit. Oh! if I could always feel as I then felt, it would be easy to preach. The service of Christ is a blessed service; I would spend and be spent in it!"

He was very much exhausted by this effort, and after taking some refreshment, he said to his wife

that he would lie down, and if he should fall asleep, she should arouse him at four o'clock, as he had an appointment to preach at five o'clock at the house of a widow lady about three miles distant. His wife endeavored to dissuade him from going, he appeared so weak and languid. She writes, "I know not of any time in my life that I tried so much to get him to give up an appointment. To induce him to do so, I told him I would ask the children their questions, and it would encourage them to have his approving smile, as he seldom heard them recite." "It is all true," said he; "my time is so taken up with public duties, that the care of the family devolves upon you. But you know that I always enforce obedience to your wishes. I hope it will not always be thus. I shall have more time, I trust, after awhile, to assist you in training our little ones. Those two churches and the Academy are more, almost, than I can attend to. You have your little 'church in the house,' and that small book, of this title, by the Rev. James Hamilton, that I purchased a few days ago, I got for your benefit. You know my motto is, *Duty before pleasure*. It would be pleasant to remain with you and the little *doves* this afternoon, but it is my duty to go and preach to that old lady, as she is unable to get out to church. So do you go now and instruct the children, and perhaps I will be somewhat refreshed by sleep." He was awakened at the time he desired. He went, preached, and returned that night.

On Monday he felt very unwell, but spent a part of the day in school. On Tuesday afternoon, he visited an elder of his church who was very ill, about two miles distant, and thought himself most decidedly worse ever after. When he returned in the evening, he said to his wife, that he did not know why it was that he had had a lingering pain ever since he had the dysentery, and that riding home pretty fast had aggravated it. He said he would go to the lecture, and if the pain was not better soon, he would take something for it. The lecture that evening was upon astronomy. He was quite enraptured with it, said it was sublime, and regretted very much that his wife had not enjoyed it with him. He said he thought that he felt as Paul did when he said, "whether he was in the body or out of the body, he could not tell," and then added, "The Professor was so grand and beautiful in his descriptions, that I felt as if I was soaring away amid the bright stars. I shall now study astronomy with greater delight than ever. But," continued he, "this pain has been increasing within the last half hour. We will use some hot fomentations, and if they do not relieve it, we will send for the Doctor." The thing was done as he directed, and he fell asleep, and slept comfortably until one o'clock, when he awoke suddenly, and said that the pain had returned with increasing violence. The Doctor was immediately sent for, but was found to be absent, and he was not expected home until noon the next day.

On Wednesday, Mr. M'Ginnes was confined to the house, but felt able to sit up during the afternoon, and enjoy the company of Professor Williams. That evening, for the last time, he sat at the table, and took tea with his family, and never did he look more joyful than upon that occasion. Professor Williams and he were led by his little daughters to the table, and there he spoke affectionately of the endearments of home, and of the wisdom and goodness of God in "setting the solitary in families."

After tea he ventured out to hear a lecture upon chemistry. At the close of which Professor Williams made a short address to the students, and expressed his gratification that that institution, which was so flourishing, was under the care of an old friend of his, and he wished it continued prosperity. To this Mr. M'Ginnes replied, and thanked the Professor for coming to impart instruction to his pupils. This was the conclusion of his out-door career.

When he returned home he felt discouraged about his prospects, for his symptoms were quite unfavorable. That night he was worse than he had been on the preceding night. At two o'clock he awoke with an intense pain. Remedies were applied but without producing at first the desired effect. The Doctor was again sent for. At length, feeling much relieved, he asked that the 103d Psalm might be read for him, and then he fell asleep.

The messenger now returned, and stated that the Doctor had to go six miles farther to see a patient,

and would not be back until noon. "Oh," said Mr. M'Ginnes, "must I wait that long? This pain is very severe. I am satisfied that it is the bilious colic, or something worse." Another messenger was now despatched after the Doctor. During the interval Mr. M'Ginnes was much engaged in prayer. Once or twice he exclaimed aloud, "Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death, O, my heavenly Father?"

The Doctor arrived about one o'clock, and by the anxious expression of his countenance intimated that his patient was worse than he expected to find him. He writes, "On Thursday about noon I visited Mr. M'Ginnes, at his request, and found him complaining of intense pain in the right iliac region accompanied by vomiting and constipation. No hernia being detected, and means to arrest the vomiting and open the bowels proving unavailing, in connexion with the other symptoms, led me to conclude that the obstruction in his bowels was mechanical in its nature, and did not admit of relief." He slept some that night, but when Friday morning came, it brought no relief to his pains. He told the Doctor that the intense pain was local, and inquired if it was not hernia? The Doctor said, No. He then asked if it would not be prudent to apply the cold water bandage. The Doctor gave his consent. This application gave him instant relief, but it was only temporary.

A short time after the Doctor left, he had a most severe pain, but of short duration; it was succeeded by another. He appeared to know that it was coming

on him, and asked his wife to bring him the large chair and his cloak, as he could, perhaps, bear the pain better if he was sitting up. He then got up, and when the pain came on, he exclaimed, "Oh! righteous Father, spare, oh! spare thy poor worm!" So intense was the pain that he sprang from the chair into the bed, and said, "Oh! my dear wife, flesh and heart will soon faint and fail under pains like these. Oh! how can I endure another. Oh! this is suffering, but it comes from my Father's hand, and I must endure it with patience."

This was about ten o'clock on Friday, and the morphine that he had been taking through the night now produced stupor. He slept so soundly that the bandage steeped in ice-water could be applied without awaking him. About three o'clock, when the Doctor, who was unremitting in his attentions, came in, he was asked what he thought of Mr. M'Ginnes's case. He replied, "It is *stubborn*." Mrs. M'Ginnes watched his countenance, and saw that it was expressive of no hope, and from that moment her heart sunk within her.

In the evening a lady suggested the propriety of sending for another physician. Mr. M'Ginnes was asked if he desired it. He said, "No; I have unbounded confidence in Dr. Shade's judgment, and I am in the hands of the great Physician; if he designs me to get well, he will bless the means now used; if he does not, no earthly physician can save me."

When the Doctor left he desired to be sent for again about midnight. This was done, and Mr. M'Ginnes was thought at the time to be sinking, his extremities having already become cold, but he was not suffering so much as he had been during the day. About one o'clock the Doctor told Mrs. M'Ginnes that he had felt alarmed ever since Friday morning about her husband's case, and that the symptoms then were very unfavorable. It was then thought best to send for Mr. M'Ginnes's parents immediately. The Doctor left, and Mrs. M'Ginnes went and kneeled down by the bedside of her dying husband, and asked one of the elders present to please to unite again with them in prayer. From this prayer, in which Mr. Blair prayed that Mr. M'Ginnes might be prepared to appear before his Judge, he first learned that his family had despaired of his life. He grasped his wife's hand more firmly, and almost sobbed aloud. When they arose from their knees, he inquired, "My friends, do you think that I am going to die?" Mr. Blair replied, "The Doctor says that your symptoms are very alarming." "Does he?" said he, "Oh! it is a solemn thing to die. I did not think my time would come so soon. Perhaps, the Doctor is mistaken; I feel quite strong; I am better than I have been for some hours. Send for the Doctor; tell him that I want to see him; tell him not to be afraid to come. And, oh! my *own Libbie*, do not weep so, I want to be tranquil." He then said, "Yes, I now think the Doctor is right;" and in a strong voice he

spoke about his business being in a very embarrassed state, said he was much in debt; and it seemed to grieve him.

His wife desired him not to exhaust his remaining strength in talking about his temporal affairs, but to wait until the Doctor came, and she hoped, as he was so strong, that the Doctor would have a more favorable opinion of his case.

“Then,” said he, “has the Doctor concealed the fact from my *poor wife*?” She replied, that the Doctor had kindly expressed his fears to her, but yet they had hope. “Oh! I thank the Doctor for that. It was kind in him to tell you. But he is correct; this is death. Oh! I would not appear before my Judge unprepared, and I must talk. This is not a time to be silent, if I am so soon to exchange worlds.” He then engaged most earnestly in prayer that he might not be deceived in regard to his hope. He prayed, “Oh, Lord! Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sins are ever before me. Thou Searcher of hearts, search me; try me, even as silver is tried. Oh! thou divine Redeemer, suffer me not to deceive myself in this trying hour. May I be washed, justified, and sanctified, and made meet for thy blessed presence.”

He paused, and his wife said, “My dear husband, Christ and his cross has been all your theme. You have preached him as a mighty Saviour.” “Yes,” said he; “but know you not that some who have

preached Christ to others will be themselves cast away?"

The Doctor now came in. It was about three o'clock in the morning. He explained to him the nature of his disease, and announced to him the impossibility of his recovery. "Then," said Mr. M'Ginnes, with great Christian composure, "I am about to enter a world of spirits. I have but a little time to live. I did not think that my death would have come so soon, I felt so much better. But it is all well." Then turning to his wife, he said, "Come, my dear wife, we have lived happily together eleven years, but now the time for our separation has come. Remember and plead the promises: the widow's God will be yours. And O endeavor to train our little ones for the heavenly kingdom. Let us be an undivided family in heaven. Bring my children to me, that I may give them my dying blessing." When they were brought, he placed his hand upon the head of his first-born, his only son, and said, "The Lord bless you, my son. You are now the head of this family. Be a good boy, love and obey your dear mother, comfort and protect her, and may your father's God be your God, and keep you from all evil." To the little girls he said, "Come, kiss your dear papa before he dies," and blessed them. "My poor little Mary," said he, "I shall not see. Give her my dying blessing." "Eliza," he continued, "teach them the virtues, oh, teach them the virtues." Then turning to his brother, he said, "Brother Wil-

son, shield and protect my fatherless daughters." And added, "I am so glad, my dear brother, that you connected yourself with the Church. Oh, be a bright, an ardent Christian."* To his physician he said, "Doctor, my dear friend, you have done your best. May God bless you. Farewell."

He then engaged in prayer for some time in a whisper, after which he said, "I bless the Lord that he ever permitted me to preach his gospel. But, oh, I have been an unprofitable servant; I have done nothing, and I can do nothing to merit the favor of God. No, blessed Jesus—

‘Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling.’

I want you to know, my friends, that I die leaning upon the righteousness of Christ alone. Oh, if I am not what I would be, it is by the grace of God that I am what I am. ‘I am a miracle of grace.’ I can now say, ‘for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’

“ ‘Who, who would live alway, away from his God;
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o’er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns.
Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet;

* Mr. John Henry Wilson M’Ginnes died on February 2d, 1853, at Shade Gap, of hemorrhage of the lungs, in the 27th year of his age. “He was,” says his biographer, “a graduate of Marshall College, Pa., a man of fine talents, a ripe scholar, and a meek and unostentatious Christian.”

While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul.' ”

Hearing some in the room talk of sending for his parents, he said, “Send quickly;” and added, “What will my aged parents think of this? And my poor sister Anna? It will be a hard stroke on her.” He then reminded his wife of a request he had made to her some months previous, which was, to have his remains taken to Shippensburg in case she survived him. And then reminded her of another request, made more than a year before, that, in such a case, she would have his corpse examined by a physician twenty-four hours after life was supposed to be extinct. Then, after giving minute directions in reference to his temporal affairs, the Academy, and the church, and having named the ministers who should be requested to deliver funeral discourses—one at his residence, and the other at Shippensburg—he said, “To me the grave hath no terrors. Christ hath scattered far its gloom. Yes—

‘The graves of all the saints be blessed,
And softened every bed :
Where shall the dying members rest,
But with their dying Head.’ ”

He then prayed fervently that he might be permitted to glorify God in his death. He said, “O Lord, let not my sun go down under a cloud.” This prayer he frequently repeated. As his wife was applying something to his limbs to warm them, he

said, "My dear, you cannot restore heat. This is the chill of death—first to the ankles, then to the knees, anon to the loins; soon it will reach the seat of life" (placing his hand upon his heart), "and then, oh! change! oh! wondrous change! One moment here in mortal pangs, and the next" (pointing upwards with a significance and rapture, that can be appreciated by those only who witnessed it) "away beyond the stars."

To those around him he said, "This is death. I have often read of 'the valley of the shadow of death,' but now I know what it is from experience, for I am passing through it; but blessed be God 'he is with me, his rod and his staff they comfort me.' Remember, that I as your pastor and teacher have not failed to warn you of the certainty of death and of judgment. I am now dying, but I die happily, for Jesus has washed me—a poor sinner—in his precious blood."

Beholding his wife weeping, he said to her in an imploring tone, "My poor widowed wife, do not weep so; it looks like murmuring. Why should you weep when I am going to my 'Father's house' where 'are many mansions,' to 'his presence' where 'is fulness of joy,' and 'to his right hand where are pleasures for evermore?' You have been the sharer of all my labors; you have nursed a poor invalid for eleven years, who is now going to leave you amidst many cares; your sorrows too will increase upon you; and you will be bereft of my sympathy; but you have a

sympathizing Saviour, who has been with you in six troubles, and who will not forsake you now.

“ ‘ His love, in times past, forbids me to think,
He'll leave you at last, in trouble to sink ;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms his good pleasure to help you quite through.’ ”

“ He has been the guide of your youth, and he will still guide you. Plead the promises, and they are as numerous as the leaves of the blessed Bible. To thy care, heavenly Father, I commit my poor widow and orphans.” His wife was obliged to leave the room, and give vent to her feelings, although her husband's brief address had greatly comforted her. After this, she took her station at his head, and when he again spoke, she said, “ My dear husband, I had hoped that you would have closed my dying eyes.” He replied, “ But that I should be taken first, seems to be the will of Providence, and it is unquestionably right. Live,” continued he, “ live for the children whom God hath given us, born and unborn ; and oh ! Eliza, *bring them all with you—all—home.*”

During Saturday he suffered severe pain, and once when he was thought to be almost gone, he moaned, and, looking up at his wife, he asked, “ Am I patient ? I want to be patient. Pray for me, that I may have patience to wait until my heavenly Father sees fit to remove me from this suffering.” She replied, “ You are patient, but your sufferings are intense.”

At one time, when in great pain, he exclaimed, "Oh! this is agony,—this is suffering; but it is nothing compared with what my Saviour suffered for me. Yes, 'the wages of sin is death,' but, thanks be to God! 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.'"

The sick-room was filled throughout the whole of that day with sorrowing friends, and to almost every one he said something appropriate. An eye-witness writes: "I stood by the bedside of the dying man that day (Saturday, August 30th, 1851), as well as the one following. It was a time of sore lamentation in that house. Strong men wept. And as many as beheld the grapplings of that man of God with the last enemy, then felt, if they had never felt before, that 'the Lord knoweth them that are his,' and is known of them. It was indeed a trying scene. The affectionate brother, the beloved and honored teacher, the faithful minister, the kind husband and the indulgent father, was about passing through the valley of the shadow of death. Many were present, that they might gaze for the last time upon the features of a friend whom none knew but to love, and whom none named but to praise; and that they might bid him, as they well knew it would be on earth, a final farewell.

"Prayer at different times and by different persons was offered up, and the good man's lips, when he was not engaged in discoursing with those around

him, whether others were praying or not, were almost incessantly moving in silent prayer."

Once, when thus praying, he said aloud, "Ah! Mohammed is a false prophet; the Lord is my rock." Then looking up, he said, "See, Satan, the adversary, desired to shake my faith, but my hope is founded on the Rock of ages." Twice or thrice was the adversary permitted sorely to assail him, but the result in every instance was increased peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

He took special interest in those of his students who were studying for the ministry. He called them individually to him, and clasping them by the hand, gave them his dying counsel. To one he said, with an earnest, dying look, that will not soon be forgotten, "If you live to preach the gospel, be a faithful, devoted minister. Do your whole duty, and God will bless you." To another, a promising student, he said, "I want you to prepare for a great and a good work. In the ministry you will find more real pleasure than in any other calling." To another young man, somewhat addicted to intemperate habits, he said, taking him by the hand, and addressing him by name, "Keep away from temptation, and make your peace with God before you come to die. Remember, this is the dying request of one who feels a deep interest in your eternal welfare." To another he said, "Live the life of a Christian, and the Christian's death will be yours." He then said, "Come, my young friends, and see how a Christian can die.

With Christ as his friend, he need fear no evil. I am now going through the dark valley, but his presence is with me, and my soul is full of comfort." He frequently said to those around him, "Cultivate holiness of heart—cultivate holiness of heart; mark *that*."

In the evening, as he looked out of the window, around which vines were twining, he exclaimed, "Oh! how peaceful all nature is! How pleasant to die with the setting sun!" His wife remarked, "But to-morrow is the Sabbath." He replied, "Oh, then, I shall be losing no Sabbaths. Last Sabbath I was in the church militant, to-morrow I shall spend in the church triumphant. My harp shall then be attuned to new and nobler strains. Oh! grant me but the *lowest seat*, Divine Redeemer, in thy blissful presence—the *lowest seat*,—and I shall be satisfied." As he was very fond of singing, he asked one of the students, that evening, to sing for him the verse commencing with—

"Jesus, the vision of thy face," &c.

But, as this was not the first line of any hymn, the verse could not be found. He then asked his wife to give it out, but her voice faltered, upon which he gave out himself the following verses, repeating two lines at a time, and in the singing of which he took an active part himself—singing, indeed, in the loudest strains of which his extreme weakness would permit,—

“Jesus! the vision of thy face
 Hath overpowering charms ;
 Scarce shall I feel Death's cold embrace,
 If Christ be in my arms !

“ Then, while ye hear my heart-strings break,
 How sweet my minutes roll !
 A mortal paleness on my cheek,
 And glory in my soul !”

These are the last two verses of the 618th hymn, and the last that he ever requested to be sung. Could there have been any more appropriate? Immediately after singing, he requested that a brief prayer might be offered, and then said to those who were in the room, “ Last Sabbath I preached to you from the words, ‘ When I am weak, then am I strong.’ This poor body was weak then, but I was strong in the Lord.” To his wife he said, “ I wish you, in preparing my body for burial, to write these words upon my breast, ‘ Remember the words which I spake unto you, being yet present with you.’ ”

That night he suffered greatly. Once, having groaned, he said, “ That was a groan but no murmur. Oh ! let patience have her perfect work.” His wife said, “ You will soon be where

‘ No groans shall mingle with the songs
 Which warble from immortal tongues.’ ”

“ Oh !” said he, “ there will be no *sin* there, and that is better than no groans.”

Once he repeated the following verses, found in Heb. xii. 22-24. "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel," and then remarked, "I am learning something of that mystery of godliness into which angels desire to look,

‘ They never sunk so low,
 They were not raised so high;
 They never knew such depths of woe,
 Such heights of majesty.’

"Oh no; it was left for poor, sinful, fallen man to taste 'redeeming grace and dying love.' O! the depth of the riches of the love of God."

About midnight the 103d Psalm was read, and a prayer made. "There," said Mr. M'Ginnes so soon as the number of the psalm was mentioned, "there is that precious psalm; but I fear that I cannot enjoy it, the pain is now so great." He, however, repeated it all, in a whisper, very correctly; and also joined in the prayer that followed, seeming to anticipate just what the speaker was going to say. Soon after this the severe vomiting commenced. He seemed to understand clearly the nature of his disease. He turned

to the Doctor, and said, "Doctor, there is that stagnacious vomiting." It was exceedingly painful, and he prayed, "Lord Jesus, come quickly, come quickly. Nevertheless, not my will but thine, O! Lord, be done. O! pray," he continued, "that I may depart—that I may be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." His wife asked him if he remembered the hymn,

"Angels will hover round my bed,
And waft my spirit home."

"Oh! yes," said he, "and there is now nothing but this thin, frail partition of flesh and blood between me and the great cloud of witnesses." At one time receiving some ice water, he said, "Now, now, I shall drink no more, until I drink of the water of the river of life, as it flows fresh and for ever from the throne of God and the Lamb."

As the morning approached he several times repeated, "Oh, how delightful to die upon the Sabbath! How delightful to go to heaven on the morning of that day upon which the Saviour rose." And this thought of being on that holy day with his Lord in paradise seemed to overcome all the pain of dying.

About the dawn of day being told that his parents had arrived, he said, "Bring them in quickly; soon all will be over." His little daughter Mary, who had been absent, came also with them, and received his dying blessing. When his father and mother approached his bedside, he exclaimed, "My venerable

father! My venerable mother!" His mother remarked, as he held out his hand to welcome them, "My hands are cold." "So are mine, mother," he quickly replied. He then thanked the Lord for permitting him to behold his parents once more in the flesh; and told them that he was passing through the valley of the shadow of death, but that he feared no evil. He then told them as he had told others before, that Christ was his only hope.

Desirous of hearing his father's voice once more in prayer, he asked him to pray for him. The old gentleman having travelled the whole night, and being much fatigued and quite nervous, felt unfitted to lead in prayer. At his son's request, however, a short prayer was offered. After which, Mr. M'Ginnes said to his father, with a look full of tenderness, "Father, here are my poor *widow* and *orphans*." His father replied, "Commit them to our covenant God. He has said, 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.'" He said, "It has been done, father. I have now nothing to do but to die." Then he said,

"Cease, *pilgrim*, cease, thy race is run,
Thy warfare cease, thy work is done."

The Doctor coming in at that time desired him to take a little more stimulus, observing that while there is life there is hope. Mr. M'Ginnes was raised up in the bed that he might swallow the more easily, but the effort overcame him, and he said, "Lay me down.

I am dying now. Doctor, where is your hope?" Then folding his hands upon his breast, and looking once more upon all present, he closed his eyes and said, "Into thy hands, blessed Redeemer, I commit my spirit." His breathing now became difficult.

His wife asked, "My dear husband, do you still know me?" Gently opening his eyes, and trying to smile upon her, he replied, "Oh yes, my beloved wife, my sight will be *very dim* when I cease to know you. But the windows are becoming darkened." About five minutes after his brother Wilson asked him if he knew him? He replied, "Oh yes, dear brother," and then said, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." And on Sabbath morning at twenty minutes past eight o'clock, his ransomed soul winged its way to the spirit land.

The companion of his youth and riper age, with their six interesting children, survive him, to mourn an irreparable loss. May his God be theirs, and the everlasting arms be around them.

On Sabbathafternoon, religious exercises, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Sterrett, were held at the parsonage, and next morning, after some appropriate remarks and the singing of the 625th hymn, the remains of our deceased brother, accompanied by a large concourse of sorrowing students and weeping friends, were carried to Shippensburg, and on Tuesday morning at ten o'clock they were interred in the burial-ground attached to the Presbyterian Church of that place. "When laid in the grave," the Rev. Mr. Harper

writes, "there was a heavy shower of rain, and in the address I was necessarily brief. The number of students, who accompanied his body from Shade Gap to this place, was large, and they evidently were deeply conscious of the great loss they had sustained. This entire community, including all denominations, bewailed his death; and the company that attended his funeral was much larger than usual on such occasions." On the second Sabbath after his death (Sept. 14th), the Rev. Mr. Sterrett preached a funeral discourse at Shade Gap, from 2 Tim. iv. 22, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit." And the Rev. Mr. Harper preached one on the same day at Shippensburg, from Eccles. iii. 4, "A time to mourn."

Thus terminated the life of one of Christ's ministers, the end and aim of all whose acquisitions and actions, so far as we can judge, ever was the glory of God in the salvation of precious, immortal souls. A ministerial brother who knew him well, writes, "Eminently endowed with gifts and grace, the deceased adorned every station he filled. But his work on earth is done. The Master hath called him; and he is now engaged, we doubt not, in the more elevated exercises of the upper sanctuary. May his mantle fall on not a few of his pupils, and may his brethren in the ministry be excited by his example to increased activity in the service of their Lord."

The following resolutions of the Philo Literary Society of Jefferson College, among others that might

be presented, we deem in place here, and worthy of insertion.

PHILO HALL, JEFFERSON COLLEGE,
Canonsburg, Oct. 3d, 1851.

Whereas, it has pleased the Allwise God, to remove, by death, one who in former years was an active and zealous member of the Philo Literary Society, and in his after life was an honor to the association, therefore,

Resolved, That in the death of the Rev. J. Y. M'Ginnes, we recognise the hand of that God, whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out.

Resolved, That, by this dispensation of Providence, this society has been deprived of a worthy member, the world of a philanthropist, the Christian religion of a noble advocate, and his friends of all that in the son, the brother, the husband, and the father, could be desired.

Resolved, That in the life and character of the deceased, there is set a bright example to all who would live happily, and die in the "hope of a blessed immortality beyond the grave."

Resolved, That we deeply sympathize with the friends of the deceased, and that we point them for comfort to Him who "heareth the cry of the afflicted."

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of the deceased, and that they be published in the "Presbyterian Advocate," the "Cham-

bersburg Repository and Whig," the "Weekly News," and the "Huntingdon Journal."

J. H. CLARK,

E. L. DODDER,

W. W. MILLER,

Committee.

A neat monument, 9 feet high, and costing \$175, has been erected at the grave of our departed brother, and bears the following inscription:

"To the memory of the Rev. James Y. McGinnes, who departed this life at Shade Gap, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, on Sabbath morning August 31st, 1851, in the 36th year of his age, and the 11th year of his ministry. A dutiful son—a devoted husband—a fond father—a beloved pastor—an able and successful minister, and zealously devoted to the interests of education and religion. He died as he lived with a joyful hope in Jesus of a blissful immortality. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'

"The deceased was pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Shade Gap, and the founder and Principal of Milnwood Academy. By his students and surviving relatives this monument has been erected as a tribute of their affection and esteem."

HIS CHARACTER.

THE first time that I saw Mr. M'Ginnes, was in the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church at Waynesburg, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, in the fall of 1848, at a meeting of the Presbytery of Huntingdon. He had been appointed at the previous meeting of Presbytery to preach the missionary sermon on this occasion. I had already heard of his character as a preacher, and therefore took my seat with the expectation of not only being profited, but of enjoying an intellectual feast.

After the previous exercises, in which he was assisted by another brother, he arose and announced as his text, Esther iv. 14, "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

This was a new text, I thought, for a missionary sermon, but a very suitable one; and I at once felt anxious to know what he would make of it. He gave us his introduction and entered upon the body of his discourse, and I began to think that my expectations were not about to be realized—that he was not so great a preacher as I had anticipated,—for while his style was chaste and perspicuous, and his ideas good, I saw nothing that was particularly attractive, either as to matter or manner. But the further he advanced

with his subject, the more animated he became. His nervous energy was aroused, his soul was warmed into vigorous life, his eye was lighted up, and from that time to the close of his sermon, there was a richness of thought, a propriety and eloquence of diction, and a matchless force in delivery, that were truly gratifying, and fully convinced me that he was no ordinary preacher. The discourse gave universal satisfaction. The opinion I then formed of his ability and worth, was never diminished, but was confirmed only, and increased by every interview that I held with him.

In person, he was about the middle height, of slender frame, but well proportioned. He had but little ambition for "outward adorning." His thoughts were upon loftier and nobler themes. There was nothing tawdry or foppish about him; he scorned everything like ostentation; but his appearance was always modest and becoming. His temperament was nervous bilious, imparting to both body and mind great activity and endurance. His eye was dark and piercing; his features were strongly marked; and his countenance was expressive of much simplicity of character, sweetness of disposition, singleness of purpose, and, especially in all his public efforts, of indomitable energy.

He had often in his public addresses, at the close of certain passages of unusual force or beauty, a rigidness of muscle about the mouth, a peculiar compression of the lips, a sudden jerking of the head,

with a corresponding motion of his whole body, and a slight, but instantaneous rising upon his feet, all indicative of the greatest decision of character, and of the greatest firmness of belief in the truth and appropriateness of what he was asserting; and all exhibiting a manner in striking harmony with the sentiments uttered, and eminently adapted to impress them upon the minds of his hearers.

His public delivery was always earnest, eloquent, and controlling. He seldom attempted to speak in public, without understanding well his subject, and hence he was self-possessed, and always spoke with effect. When, however, he was suddenly called upon, and from a sense of duty was forced, upon the spur of the moment, to give utterance to his opinions, he was ever found equal to the task. He was at a loss for neither ideas nor words. And often would there be such a flow of language, and such a strain of elevated sentiment, as greatly to astonish and delight every auditor. It has been said, that during his last and memorable visit to Canonsburg, he made, before the Literary Societies of the College, as occasion demanded, some of the most chaste and beautiful addresses that were ever delivered there.

At one time his eloquence would be soft and easy as the gently-flowing rivulet, at another, it would be bold and sublime as the wintry storm. The one was persuasive from its winning mildness; the other was effective from its overwhelming power.

An anecdote given me by a neighboring brother,

is illustrative of the latter kind of his eloquence. He was assisting Mr. M'Ginnes during an interesting communion season at Shade Gap. One evening he preached a sermon in the Academy, addressed especially to youth. Mr. M'Ginnes was aroused by the subject. As soon as the sermon was ended, he made a fervent and appropriate prayer, and then followed with some remarks of a most eloquent and impressive character. Amidst other matters of thrilling interest, he related the following incident, which occurred during one of his journeys, designed to show the danger to which a convinced sinner is exposed by delaying to come at once to Christ, and he so related it, that it almost made the hair of those who heard to rise. He observed that he had met with a man who was once anxious about his soul, but who had grieved away the Spirit of God, and now had no hope, and, said Mr. M'Ginnes, with most terrific effect, "despair was written upon his countenance in the blazing characters of hell, as he uttered the words, *'I am a doomed man! I am a doomed man!'*"

No sooner were the services closed, than one of the students came forward, "pricked in his heart," to ask, "Men and brethren, what shall I do?" He was immediately urged to the exercise of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" and then, with characteristic prudence, Mr. M'Ginnes placed him under the care of a Christian student, that his serious impressions might be deepened instead of being allowed to pass away.

Another instance has been given of the power of his oratory. He was preaching from Is. xxviii. 16, and in the midst of his appeals to all God's rational creation, to witness the sure foundation which He had laid in Zion, he addressed the devils in hell, and said, "*Behold, ye accursed spirits of the pit! ye, who have sworn eternal hatred to the Church—she flings back your defiance; she dares you to the assault; she rests upon a foundation, against which you, and all the gates of hell, shall not prevail. You may vent your malignant spite; you may try all the cunning of those hellish arts, by which you at first deceived our federal head, and brought our Maker's curse upon the world; but ye shall be foiled in every scheme; ye shall be thwarted in every effort, for the bulwarks of Almighty grace defend the city where we dwell. The foundation, upon which we now build, is the rock Christ Jesus, your Master and ours. Make ready then your disciplined legions, and, strong in the mighty association of principalities and powers, come up to the charge, and ye shall be scattered like the chaff before the whirlwind. Gird yourselves together, but ye shall be utterly broken in pieces. The foundation which ye assault is as immovable as the throne of the Eternal.*" This whole address, it is said, produced a most thrilling sensation.

At another time, the tone of his eloquence would be gentle and soothing as the mild zephyrs of spring. His thoughts ran much on death and heaven, and

he often dwelt upon these subjects in his public addresses.

From many expressions which dropped from his lips during the last two or three years of his life, he seemed to have an impression that he would be early called away from us. I will merely mention one. At his spring communion, in March, 1851, when there was a good deal of religious interest awakened, as already stated, his wife said to him on Sabbath morning, that she thought she could not go to church that day, as one of the students was sick at their house; and as so many of their young men appeared to be serious, she said that she did not like to ask any of them to take her place in the sick-room. He replied in a very decided tone, "O Eliza, it must be so planned that you can go. Our communion Sabbaths together on earth are numbered. They are too precious to be absent from." And in the evening when they were conversing about the exercises of the day, he said, "It was an earnest of our heavenly inheritance."

This impression of the shortness of his stay on earth will account, no doubt, in some good degree, for the frequency, as well as the vividness, of his heavenly contemplations. An intelligent lady once remarked that in his descriptions of heaven, he was more impressive than any person that she had ever heard; he seemed to present, she said, the very reality before his hearers. Said another, His sermon on 'the marriage supper of the Lamb,' from Rev.

xix. 9, was the most beautiful thing that I ever listened to."

At the communion table his remarks were always happy. Like the ever memorable Payson he was here, especially, at home. He felt that his divine Master was by his side, and his soul glowed with holy fire as he discoursed to the admiring communicants of "Jesus Christ, evidently set forth before their eyes, crucified among them." On this theme, in a remarkable degree, his "heart indited good matter, and his tongue was the pen of a ready writer." At one communion season, while assisting me, he addressed the communicants for about twenty or thirty minutes, in a strain of the most fervid eloquence, from those sweet and weighty words of Paul to the Corinthian Christians, "All things are yours," &c. 1 Cor. iii. 21-23. As he enlarged upon each item there specified, I thought the passage was richer than I had ever before anticipated; and, during his address, he held the entire audience in breathless attention. At another communion season, in the same place, he was most happy in his address to non-communicants; especially to the baptized children of the Church, whom he styled "the children of the covenant." It was the most appropriate, persuasive, and solemn address of the kind that I ever heard. I wish all those words were written with ink in a book, so that we all might read them; and written, as with the pen of a diamond, upon the heart of every baptized youth in our land. But alas! they are

gone. They were the effusions of the moment, springing from an eloquent and pious soul. They made their impression at the time; an impression which will never be entirely forgotten; but the words themselves are now floating only upon the breeze.

In June, 1849; when the Rev. George Elliott was ordained at Alexandria, Pennsylvania, Mr. M'Ginnes preached the ordination sermon before Presbytery, from 2 Cor. v. 20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The sermon was delivered amidst much bodily infirmity; but it was an able and earnest effort, and gave great satisfaction. One of the audience, at whose house he had received some medical relief a few days before, remarked to one of the older ministers present, that she did not think that Mr. M'Ginnes was able to preach at all, but that he had done admirably. He replied, "Brother M'Ginnes always gives us 'strong meat,' but I fear that the sword will soon cut through the scabbard; that his mind will wear out his body." The reply was prophetic.

To expect, however, that the reading of his sermons will afford anything like the same delight that the hearing of them did, would be expecting too much. His matter, however excellent in itself, without his manner, is destitute of one very essential element of power. Said a writer of the great Pericles, who had been injured by imperfect attempts to represent him, "Action is almost all." Many con-

sider action to be the soul of oratory. The immortal Demosthenes thrice declared it to be the first thing in discourse. It is recorded of Friar Narni, a Capuchin, that he was so remarkable for his eloquence, that his hearers, after one of his sermons, cried out *mercy* in the streets as he passed home; and that thirty bishops started up under another discourse, and hurried home to their respective dioceses, determined to make full proof of their ministry. Yet when his sermons came to be published, they were thought to be unworthy of his reputation; which shows how much depends on action, and how correct the saying of Demosthenes was on that subject. Similar remarks have been made of the inimitable Whitefield, and of other eminent orators. It must not then be deemed strange, if the printed sermons of our worthy brother should be labelled by many, "*Tekel.*"

But it is, to say the least, no mean evidence of the high estimation in which he was held, that we are able to affirm that those who heard him most liked him best. An intelligent hearer said to the writer, "His sermons were *always* excellent, whether he was sick or well. When his congregation did not think him able to preach, he would astonish them. I have heard other preachers, and the best of them would sometimes fail; but I never saw one like Mr. M'Ginnes, for he was brilliant in *every sermon.*" Said another, a member of his Session, "I have no preference for his sermons. They all appeared so good to me, that I should like to see any of them

published, so that I could place a copy of them in my library, as a memento of one whom I always respected and admired."

His physician in Illinois, also a ruling elder, says, "that he was regarded by all as an able and devoted minister. And that when he came to the conclusion that he must remove from the valley of the Mississippi, all were satisfied that such was his duty; yet, at the same time, this necessity was regarded as a mysterious dispensation of Providence, by which his charge and the country generally were to be deprived of the labors of one peculiarly adapted to this field." The Rev. Robert Steel (who, a few years since, also "entered into his rest"), the successor of Mr. M'Ginnes at Lewistown, Illinois, in writing to him under date of Dec. 2d, 1845, says, "I presume there will be no wrong in saying to you, now that you are removed from this people, that I find the odor of your name very sweet among them. I believe they universally regret your departure. They never speak of you but with affection. And of your preaching they speak in high terms. Excuse me for saying so much of you. Justice, I think, demands no less, however much we ought to avoid saying anything that would exalt a man's opinion of himself, especially the minister of the gospel, who, of all others, should esteem himself the least." His most intimate friend at the West, thus writes, "My impressions of his preached sermons were then, and now are, of a most favorable character. I thought them

clear, richly evangelical, and delivered with power. In Illinois he was remarkably popular as a minister, as a pastor, and as a man. His memory is still cherished there, as associated with much that is precious."

In a letter, dated Dec. 25th, 1843, recommending Mr. M'Ginnes, after his return from the West, to a vacant congregation in Pennsylvania, the Rev. Dr. M'Kinley speaks of him, as follows: "He is a young man of the *first order* of pulpit talents, as you will at once perceive when you hear him preach. He is sound to the core as to faith, and a very eloquent and impressive preacher of the gospel. I feel no hesitation in recommending him as one of the most able and promising young men that I have ever known." The same brother—for whom he had often preached—lately remarked of him to the author, "He was a very superior man." A neighboring brother writes, "I well remember my first impressions of the Rev. Mr. M'Ginnes, in seeing his penetrating eye, hearing his manly voice, and receiving his cordial hand. I distinctly remember too my pleasant surprise in hearing him preach for the first time. When he began to impart the inspiration of his theme, I was ready to say, can this be the missionary of Shade Gap? This is speech rarely heard even from marble pulpits."

He was comparatively a young man when he died, but his reputation as a preacher and an orator was very high. His pulpit career was brilliant. He was

considered an ornament to his Presbytery, and it was always a source of gratification to his brethren to hear him preach. He possessed talents of rare excellence, quick apprehension, a fertile memory, a fascinating style of elocution, admirable tact and address, and a mind that seemed to grasp, and to unfold with facility, the most complicated subject.

As a writer, he was rapid, perspicuous, and forcible. His imagination was rich and glowing, and rapidly "bodied forth the forms of things;" so much so that it seemed impossible for his hasty pen to "turn them to shapes." His mind could hardly wait upon his pen; hence the almost illegible style of his writing. And I may here observe, that he had naturally a fondness for writing poetry. His eye often "in a fine frenzy rolling," was indicative only of "the circle where his passions moved." At a very early age he exhibited his taste for poetic composition, and we have left us several of his poetic effusions of considerable merit. He tarried, however, but little "to regale himself at Parnassus; he only stopped to pluck a flower with which to adorn himself the more fully for his Master's work."

As a theologian, he was strictly orthodox. He loved the doctrines of grace as ably set forth by all the Reformers, and in our own standards. In a letter, under date of July 20th, 1850, he wrote me that he had just returned from New England, where he had visited New Haven, and had an opportunity of tasting a new dish of theology, but remarked characteristically that, "it was not very palatable to

an old-fashioned Calvinist like me." When the German Reformed congregation at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was vacant, before the Rev. A. Nevin (now of Lancaster, Pennsylvania) was invited there as a candidate, Mr. M'Ginnes had a very pressing invitation from the Consistory of that church to preach for them, with a view to a call. He was asked whether he would go? He replied, "No. I could not leave the old landmarks. I shall obtain all the honor I desire in the good Old School Presbyterian Church."

He did not, however, enter the ministry for the sake of either ease or honor, well satisfied that any who seek the ministry from such motives had better never enter it. He was a hard-working man. The maxim well applied to him, "the life of a minister is the life of his ministry." As a pastor he was affectionate, prayerful, and laborious. He "endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

As a preacher of the gospel, he "studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." He "preached the word: was instant in season, out of season; reproved, rebuked, and exhorted with all long suffering and doctrine." Nor did he serve God with that which cost him nothing. He prepared beaten oil for the sanctuary. Although he was a good extemporaneous speaker, yet whenever his time permitted he always made ample preparation for the pulpit, as his many written sermons tes-

tify. One of his parishioners once said to him, Mr. M'Ginnes, why do you spend so much time in writing your sermons, when you can extemporize with so much facility? He replied, "It is a solemn thing to serve God, and I cannot do it with that which costs me nothing. I must prepare beaten oil for the sanctuary." A conversation very similar to this is said to have taken place between President Davies and one of his confidential elders; and it may be repeated here, because appropriate in no small degree to the subject of this sketch, and because it is directly antagonistic to some of the frothy publications of the present day, in relation to this matter. This elder once said to Mr. Davies, "How is it, that you who are so well informed upon all theological subjects, and can express yourself with so much ease and readiness upon any subject, and in any company, and have language so at your command, should think it necessary to prepare and write your sermons with so much care, and take your notes into the pulpit, and make such constant use of them? Why do you not, like many other preachers, oftener preach extempore?" The reply of Mr. Davies—than whom, a greater pulpit orator this country has not produced—was, "I always thought it to be a most awful thing to go into the pulpit, and there speak nonsense in the name of God. Besides, when I have an opportunity of preparing, and neglect to do so, I am afraid to look up to God for assistance, for that would be to ask him to countenance my negligence. But when

I am evidently called upon to preach, and have had no opportunity to make suitable preparation, if I see it clearly to be my duty, I am not afraid to try to preach extempore, and I can with confidence look up to God for assistance." This is a judicious presentation of the subject, and worth volumes on the other side of the question.

President Davies said, that every sermon of his that was worth anything, cost him four days of hard labor. So with Brother M'Ginnes; though his thoughts flowed rapidly, every sermon was characterized by "the hand of the diligent." He generally wrote fully, and used his manuscript freely. He thus scouted the idea that many entertain, who have not half of his popularity, that it is unnatural, unscriptural, unhistorical, and ineffective to write much and use notes, and that we should preach wholly extempore. His early practice seems to have been this: "He wrote his sermons, and committed them to memory. This he did with astonishing quickness and ease. But, constantly harassed with the apprehension that he might forget, he after a time took short notes of his written discourses into the pulpit with him." But in later years he had no hesitation in using his manuscript fully. He was, however, familiar with it, and was therefore, never trammelled in his delivery. So he once said to me, that he did not call *it* (the manner of his delivery) reading, but preaching.

It is as true of the flock of Mr. M'Ginnes, as ever

it was of the people of either President Davies, or of the sainted M'Cheyne's charge, that they were guilty of man-worship. Both his congregation and his pupils idolized him; and because of this, perhaps, as in other cases, it was necessary for him to be removed from their midst. His death produced a shock, from which neither have since recovered.

The following incidents are illustrative of the ardent attachment that was cherished towards him by his beloved pupils. After his death, several of the young men boarded with Mrs. M'Ginnes. She was much affected one day, picking up the Bible of one of them, in observing a little ringlet of hair carefully stitched on that verse in 2d Corinthians, from which Mr. M'Ginnes had preached his last sermon. Upon inquiry, it was found that several of the young men had asked for locks of his hair, and that was the way in which they kept them sacred. One of the students was heard to say, after Mr. M'Ginnes's life was despaired of, "Oh, that I could die in his stead, and let him live to do good." Another, a motherless boy of ten years of age, said, "I will never love any man again as I did Mr. M'Ginnes." "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

But Mr. M'Ginnes was not only dear to his own charge, and to the pupils of his Academy: he was also beloved by all who knew him. He was a uni-

versal favorite. He had both a lovely and a loving spirit.

In social life, he stood among the foremost. He was eminently social wherever he was, at home or abroad. Great as he was as a pulpit orator, he never shone in a light more winning than when he was seen in a domestic circle. As a dutiful son, a tender father, and an affectionate husband, he had no superior. He was a truly domestic man. It was interesting to see his joy amidst his family circle. There was nothing of the *freezing atmosphere* about him. His house was the spot he ever loved the best. He never thought it beneath *his* dignity to mingle in those little pleasures which he termed "the great sweeteners of domestic life."

One pleasing habit we have noticed. He was accustomed every morning, just after family worship, to call all his children to him, beginning at the eldest, to give him their morning kiss, and then to direct them to their mother to say their prayers and receive her parting kiss. Whenever absent from home, he was always anxious to hear from it, and was continually writing letters thither; and he always enjoyed upon his return, any little surprise that his family had prepared for him in his absence, with the greatest delight.

He was a generous, noble-hearted, and warm friend. He accordingly made friends wherever he went, and was ever treated like a son or a brother. He was not, therefore, a stranger to the proverb of Solomon, "A

man that hath friends, must show himself friendly.' A certain poet has said, "Friendship is but a name;" but Mr. M'Ginnes says, "he was an ascetic, melancholy misanthrope, who said so. It is one of the dearest boons of heaven to man,—a pledge of life, and light, and peace, an antepast of heaven,—so I have found it."

"He was given to hospitality," as the apostle exhorts. Living so remote from the public thoroughfares, as he did, and not often meeting with his ministerial brethren, he enjoyed their society exceedingly. A meeting of Presbytery, or a visit from a minister, was to him like an "oasis in the desert." He always welcomed these, as well as his parishioners, pupils, acquaintances, and even strangers, cordially to his house, and made them all feel at home.

His conversation was instructive and entertaining, and always full of life and good humor. He had a vein of pleasantry about him that was attractive; and he was, no doubt, often tempted to carry this to an extreme. He may, at times, in consequence, have injured, to some extent, the influence of his occasional ministrations among us. Many solemn appeals that were made by him in the pulpit might have had their point somewhat blunted by the recollection of his merriment in the private, social circle; but ordinarily this was not the case, and so far as there was a tendency towards it, we know that he was himself among the first to regret it, while his usual cheerfulness rendered him acceptable and useful to all classes.

His manners were agreeable; being unaffected and graceful. He was unassuming, affable, and perfectly accessible to all.

His mental powers, as already seen, were of a high order, fitting him to be not only the popular orator, but also the able scholar and the successful leader, whether in education or religion. They were active, discriminating, and commanding. His pupils, although fully at their ease with him in the school-room, the parlor, or at the playground, were never known to treat him with degrading familiarities. Their love to him and their respect for him equally forbade it. In sympathizing with them in their studies and innocent amusements, in being their confidant and counsellor, and in his earnestness to promote both their greatest intellectual and spiritual welfare, he became to them an object of the highest esteem and veneration. Hence, commanding both their affection and respect, he had very little difficulty in securing their obedience. His word was law among them. Whatever he said, settled all their controversies. They had full confidence in him, both as to sound judgment and honest intention. He had also very great tact in managing his students. Said a friend, "He had so well trained his boys, that they moved forward in one unbroken phalanx, to carry out any purpose he wished." It has been asserted that there was but one student that ever said anything against Mr. M'Ginnes; and it was said that he was not fit to be at the Academy.

Mr. M'Ginnes was a good critic, and a close ob-

server of men and things. He understood well Pope's adage,

“The proper study of mankind is man.”

Nor was he backward to express his sentiments whenever the occasion called for them. He remarked one day of a brother clergyman, “I do not know which to admire most, his head or his heart.” To another, he said, “Dear brother, the more I know you, the better I love you;” and of another, he observed, “Oh, Brother — is a man after my own heart.”

He was a fearless advocate of what he believed to be the truth, and he would not be imposed upon; nor was he ever at a loss for an apt reply, when attacked by an opponent. One day, he went to hear a clergyman of another denomination. He wished to sit below as an auditor, but his brother insisted on his taking a seat with him in the pulpit. He did so. But, after getting him there, and exposing him to the public gaze, the minister made a rude attack upon Presbyterianism; and when he was through his discourse, he did not even call upon Mr. M'Ginnes to pray. The next day this minister met him, and extended his hand to greet him, but Mr. M'Ginnes declined it, at the same time remarking that he associated with gentlemen. In relating this anecdote afterwards to a friend, Mr. M'Ginnes said that the conduct of that clergyman towards him was like that of Joab towards Amasa, when he said, “Art thou in health, my brother?” and then smote him under the fifth rib. He said that it was “an outrageous lam-

pooning of Presbyterianism," which he had been compelled to listen to, and that if he had been invited to pray, as he of course expected that he would be, he intended to have taken the liberty of first telling the audience what Presbyterianism was.

A short time after he removed to Shade Gap, he was introduced to a man who is called "A stiff Seceder," and who, Mr. M'Ginnes said, when relating the circumstance, thought himself one of "the people, and that wisdom would die with him." The man accosted him with an air and in a manner not the most pleasant, about his singing hymns, which, he said, were human composition, whilst they praised God with an inspired psalmody. Mr. M'Ginnes inquired, as though he was very ignorant, "What do you sing?" The man replied, "David's Psalms." Again it was inquired, "Just as they are in the Bible?" "Oh, no," was the reply; "they are set to metre." "By whom?" "By John Rouse." "Well, who was this John Rouse?" "A Scotchman." Mr. M'Ginnes said, "I have only one more question to ask, *did God ever inspire a Scotchman?*" "Well," said the man, completely at his wits' end, "I don't know as he did."

A few years ago, before Mr. M'Ginnes's own dwelling was much thought of, a clergyman from New York, who visited in his family, happened to form a rather low opinion of Shade Gap, and of the people around it. He spoke somewhat disparagingly of both, and urged Mr. M'Ginnes to seek a more extensive field of usefulness.

He said that he did not like to see a man of his talents hemmed in there amidst the mountains, preaching to a mere handful of people, and that his own family, too, would grow up in ignorance. Mr. M'Ginnes replied, "There is an honorable ambition which every man should have, to do all the good that he can in the world; and it is true that my voice could be heard equally as well by one thousand persons as by two or three hundred, but then there are other things (referring to his feeble health) to be taken into consideration. And," said he, "it does not follow that our children will grow up in ignorance, for, if I remain here, I will have good schools;"—and then told the gentleman some of his plans for the future. "Oh," said the latter, "those are nothing but schemes and the notions of a *Pennsylvania* Yankee, and it is all mere wind-work. You will never carry them out." All this was spoken in a somewhat sarcastic tone, and Mr. M'Ginnes felt it, and quickly replied, "I have seen some *New York* Yankees who had all the vices of the real Yankees, without half their virtues." This cutting rejoinder instantaneously raised a hearty laugh.

In heart Mr. M'Ginnes excelled. He possessed noble traits of character. An excellent man, very much like him, once remarked of him, with his usual earnestness, "he had more soul than any man living." The following letter, too, from the pen of a pious but anxious mother, exhibits not only the confidence that his character inspired, but also the fact that the

more closely we came in contact with him, the more highly would that character be appreciated. She writes, "On reading the subscription to this letter you will, no doubt, my dear sir, feel a momentary surprise, and wonder why a stranger addresses you. Not to keep you in suspense then, I will hasten to inform you that I write to ask your aid to win a beloved child to the Saviour. This child is my youngest born. It is ——, who was at one time a room-mate of yours, and who has for your character a high esteem, and who admires your preaching. O, he is in a deep, deep sleep, and I want, if possible, to arouse him. Will you be so good as to address a few lines to him? Sometimes a personal address is blessed, when every other means has failed. I make no apology for making this request. You are a minister and a disciple of the Saviour, who went about doing good; and whether the effort is blessed or not, you will receive the thanks of an anxious mother, who, though a stranger, is your friend—she hopes in Christian bonds."

For strict conscientiousness, generous impulse, warm-hearted sympathy, and untiring zeal for his Master's honor, it would be difficult to find Mr. M'Ginnes's superior. He once said, when speaking of his multiplied labors, that he wished to live in the fear of God, and according to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, so that when he came to die, he would have nothing to do but to die. At another time, he gave to his family his views of the importance

of family religion in a most impressive manner. Not long after this, he expected to be absent all day surveying. His wife thought that she would let him rest that morning as long as he wished, and the family ate their breakfast without him. When he arose, his breakfast was ready for him, and in their hurry to get him started worship was forgotten. Soon as he returned in the evening, he inquired whether family worship had not been neglected in the morning? His wife said, that it had been. "Oh," said he, "this ought not so to be. Have my vine and olive plants been this day sheltered beneath a roof, from which no family prayer has ascended? I had rather leave you in a house without a roof than in a prayerless house." He said that he had often thought of the omission during the day; and when the time for evening worship arrived, he, in a solemn manner, confessed their omission of duty, and purposed to endeavor after new obedience in future.

It cannot be said that "the love of money" was his failing. He was generous to a fault. He said, by his conduct, with Melancthon, "Let me abound in good works, and I care not who abounds in riches." Often has he been heard to thank the Lord for giving him a liberal heart. "A liberal soul deviseth liberal things," was one of his favorite expressions. He was charitable without ostentation, and "in all things showed himself a pattern of good works." His wife, being one day from home, re-

ceived many thanks from a poor family to whose necessities Mr. M'Ginnes had been ministering, but about which Mrs. M'Ginnes knew nothing. In speaking of it, afterwards, to her husband, she remarked that there was a luxury in doing good which he should share with her. "Oh," said he, smiling, "I prefer not to let my right hand know what my left hand doeth." A few days after his return from Canonsburg, a widow lady visited him, and as they were talking about their temporal concerns, he spoke of a certain debt that he intended to forgive her. She modestly replied, "Mr. M'Ginnes, you are liberal far beyond your means; besides, you have a rising family to provide for." "Well," said he, "'I have never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.' He who feeds 'the young ravens which cry,' will not suffer my little ones to want."

He was not only remarkably benevolent, but he was also sympathizing and kind towards all who suffered. To a pious young friend in sorrow he wrote, "Be resigned; you are not a lone wanderer, with none in whom to confide, with none to pour the balm of consolation into your wounded spirit. . . . Remember that you have 'a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.' O, it is delightful to be able to say in the spirit of meek resignation, 'Not my will but thine be done.' It is delightful to be able to point you to Him who has said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' Now you can plead the promises.

Friends may forsake you; disease may lay its withering hand upon you, and steal the sparkling lustre from your eye, and the bloom of health from your cheek; every earthly hope may wither in the bud; the bright visions that, like the deluge dove, have gone forth winged with desire, may come back weary and unsatisfied at finding the world a waste; yet, if you are a child of grace, you have amidst it all a consolation, which the world can neither give nor take away. The condescending Spirit 'helpeth our infirmities.' He takes upon him a portion of our burdens to relieve us of their pressure, supports our drooping spirits, revives our dying hopes, leads to the fountain of life, and, as an earnest of the heavenly inheritance, gives us a foretaste of those joys that bloom fresh as the unwithering flowers of Eden, in the paradise above. Be of good cheer then, you have friends on earth, and you have friends in heaven." To the same friend he again wrote, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. If he depresses with one hand he will uphold with the other. If sorrow weighs down the heart, to counteract its influence he will throw around you ten thousand sources of pleasure. . . . Earth is not all gloom. It has its pleasures—its social sympathies—its domestic ties. True, they are short-lived, but still they are a cup of blessings in solitude or in society, at noon or at even.

O, 'tis sweet, at even's silent hour,
To gaze on yon blue vault above;

On faith's triumphant wing to soar,
To that bright world where all is love.
'Tis sweet to bow at memory's shrine,
To muse on early pleasures fled ;
And o'er that spot, the willow twine,
Where sleeps the loved, the sacred dead.
'Tis sweet to roam by some lone stream,
And hear its waters murmur by ;
Where moonlight beauty sheds its beam,
And whispering nightwinds gently sigh.
'Tis sweet amidst earth's selfishness,
When friendship's boon is given ;
A pledge of love, and joy, and peace,
An antepast of heaven.
But all is fleeting as a dream,
Life, health, and youth must fade ;
Though bright as morning sunlight's beam,
'Twill close in midnight shade.
Religion only can impart
Hope's loveliest, brightest ray ;
It flings a halo round the heart,
And points to endless day.

Yes, it is religion, and that alone, that can cheer us amidst life's changes. It is the faith of the gospel that supports the mourner, and that sheds a lustre around the pillow of the dying saint ; ' Hope of the comfortless, when all others cease, fadeless and pure.' "

Only a few weeks before his death, when he was taking a review of his past history, he said to his wife, " We have shared each other's sorrows, we have wept each other's tears." She could truly reply, that she had never known a sorrow that was long unsoothed by him.

The following extract from a letter, of August 6th, 1846, addressed to his wife's sister and her husband on the death of their infant son, eleven months old, is another specimen of the happy manner in which he could present consolation to the afflicted; and we believe that the extract will be acceptable to many of our readers, who have met with a similar loss, and whose hearts, in consequence, have often gushed with sorrow. Says he: "To tell you that our sympathies and tears flow, and that our prayers ascend for you in the dark hour of your tribulation, would be to tell you what is true. Our hearts bleed for you, and gladly would we offer you every comfort and consolation in our power. You have lost the cherub-smile of your baby boy; and every hope, that fondly twined around a father's and mother's heart, has been torn away as if by some ruthless hand, and those hearts' warm affections have been left to flow back cold and icy upon themselves.

"O, how much have we to remind us of the solemn declaration of the Spirit, 'vanity of vanities; all is vanity and vexation of spirit.' What can we call our own! There is not a tie that binds to earth but shall be severed. Our children are around us to-day in their freshness, their youth, and beauty, and our 'mountain stands strong.' We look at them again and start back in astonishment, for the seal of the grim monster is upon them; and the voice of inspiration comes stealing in sadness over the soul, 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the

flower of the field.' But blessed be God, this is not the final issue.

“ ‘The separation is not for ever,’ said a young missionary a few days ago, as he clasped his aged mother in his embrace, and then tore himself away to proclaim salvation to the heathen. ‘Thy brother shall rise again,’ said Jesus to his disconsolate friends. And thy babe shall rise, and you shall be with it in that blessed heaven where separation never comes, and where the ties of love remain for ever unbroken. ‘Wherefore comfort one another with these words.’ Said a gentleman once, when standing on the bank of the Hudson, ‘I always admired the scenery of the country on the other side of the river; but I confess that it has attractions now that it never before had.’ ‘What are they?’ inquired his friend. ‘Why,’ replied he, ‘my beloved son removed there a few days ago, and resides in yonder house; and my thoughts turn to it now a thousand times, to where they did once before.’

“ And, dear friends, another cord which bound you to earth is loosened. You now have another tie to draw your hearts away from earth, and call your thoughts to heaven. You would not, if you could, recall your cherub back to the dark world. You would not, if you could, remove it from the arms of the blessed Shepherd, or from the smiles of his countenance. Well then, if it cannot return to you, prepare to go to it. Go, trust the promises of the Saviour, and rest upon the riches of his almighty

grace. Yet a little while, and your race will be run, your toils ended, and you too shall join that blessed company, and gather around the throne, a happy family, where every tear is wiped from every weeping eye, and every sigh banished from every aching heart.

“May the Lord sanctify this afflictive dispensation of his providence to you, and support you by the blessed consolations of his gospel, is the prayer of your brother,

“J. Y. M’GINNES.”

Mr. M’Ginnes was especially distinguished for activity and energy of character. His motto seems to have been from his constant activity in behalf of both education and religion, “Nil sine labore.” Such a word as *impossible* was not found in his vocabulary. And whenever any of his students would come to him, and tell him that they could not succeed with their studies, he would tell them that the word “can’t” should be erased from their vocabulary, and the words “try again” be substituted in its place; making that their motto, as he had done.

Whatever he undertook he was determined to carry through. No obstacles could terrify or dishearten him. Difficulties seemed only the more to develop his natural genius. It has already been stated that when he started the Academy, he had but one or two boys for several weeks. “Why,” said a shrewd observer, “that would have frozen the soul out of any

common man.” “Ah,” said he to his brother, who seemed discouraged with the undertaking, “they will come flocking in by and by.” And in reference to his securing some appropriation from the State in behalf of the Academy, having failed in his first attempt, he remarked, just before his death, that he had another project in view in regard to it; and said, that he was determined to leave no stone unturned to accomplish it.

A correspondent writes: “Cheerfulness, energy, and industry prominently characterized him. He seemed eminently to enjoy the present, and, at the same time, to live for the future. Cheerful, when others would have been sad, he ever had in view the accomplishment of a future good. In view of difficulties, which would have intimidated others, he was courageous, determined, and persevering. He was too conscientious and magnanimous to swerve from principle. Notwithstanding the weakness of his frame, he was ever fired for action, ever ready to undergo difficulty, and to confront danger in the discharge of duty, and in the accomplishment of noble ends by noble means; and he *never failed for want of energy*. With a higher and holier end in view, he was much like Bonaparte himself, and of one as well as of the other it could be said, ‘every action incited him only to a new one.’”

But a crowning excellence was, that he consecrated all his attainments to Christ. In labor or in suffering he gloried only in “the cross.” No one who

really knew him could doubt his personal piety. His faith, repentance, and hope, as well as his holy and useful life, have all been illustrated in his previous history.

Professor Morrow writes: "In a conversation with Mr. M'Ginnes, in relation to his accepting of the invitation to deliver the anniversary address before the literary societies of Jefferson College, after presenting many reasons why I thought he ought to accept, I remarked that the invitation was flattering to a young man, and the honor sufficient to mark the period as an epoch in his life. To which he replied, 'I think I have learned to lay *self* at the *foot of the cross*. If I thought that it would increase my influence *as a minister of Christ* I would go.' The reply savored so of an entire consecration to the Saviour, that it left an impression on me which eternity shall not erase. And I trust it has been blessed in teaching me, more fully, the object for which I should live."

The following extracts are given as corroborative of the views above expressed of Mr. M'Ginnes's character, the last two being received since those views were penned. J. Alfred Shade, M.D., says: "My acquaintance with the late Rev. J. Y. M'Ginnes began with the period of his taking charge of the congregation at Shade Gap, and continued without interruption till his death. During this time ample opportunity was afforded me of estimating his qualities and character.

"As a citizen he was in the front rank of every

movement identified with the welfare of the community. The magical change in the face of affairs in his neighborhood, that ensued so rapidly after his coming, was owing mainly to his untiring energy; and, at this day, he is quoted by all classes of people as the architect of the fortunes of the flourishing village where he lived and died.

“He was eminently social in his nature, and liberal in his feelings, which led him to mix freely with the people at large, each of whom came in time to value him as a friend and esteem him as a neighbor. His Christianity was of a cheerful, benignant character, exonerating him from bringing religion into disrepute by clothing it with the unfriendly feature of cold reserve, that occasionally renders hypocrisy so transparent. A spirit of true benevolence and charity was, perhaps, the predominant trait in his Christian character. To the poor he was ever a friend, with a kind voice and a plentiful hand contributing to alleviate their condition. No man not exclusively devoted to the work, was found more frequently at the bedside of the sick and dying, or in the house of suffering; and never did the spirit of the deceased appear to better advantage than in the hour and place of darkness and grief. Perhaps it was, in a measure, owing to his large experience of suffering in his own person that he was so fully able to enter into the feelings of others in distress, and to yield them his sympathies in so abundant a degree.

“All his labors were accomplished under great physi-

cal disadvantages. During the whole of his residence here his health was very infirm. Often have I known him so prostrated as to be scarcely capable of any exertion, yet, under the stimulus of an ardent desire to be found in the way of duty, when the hour of his appointment to preach had arrived he would brace himself for the effort, and be in his place, though the consequences were almost constantly disastrous to his already enfeebled frame. The loss of such a man to his family and congregation, and indeed to his entire neighborhood, seems irreparable; but our loss is his infinite gain."

The Rev. James Harper, of Shippensburg, for whom he had often preached when visiting his friends at that place, writes thus: "Brother M'Ginnes I loved and admired very much, and always listened to him as a preacher with delight. He was beloved, and held in great admiration by the young people of this place. Full of life and energy, possessing a large fund of anecdote, an excellent mimic, and encumbered with no professional reserve, he seemed to enter with all his heart into their innocent gaieties. This, no doubt, you are prepared to admit, has its advantages and disadvantages.

"His conversational powers were excellent. Versatility and brilliancy marked the character of his mind and attainments. Acquainted with a wide range of subjects, more time and concentrated thought and attention, would have made him a proficient in any one branch of learning. His discourses

preached here, combined clearness of conception, richness of fancy, and accuracy of thought. His theological attainments struck me as being highly respectable, and to the Calvinistic system he was strongly attached, not because of early parental instruction only, but after careful investigation, and heartfelt conviction. Frequently did he present doctrines, which have always provoked controversy, so interwoven with fine illustration, as to command the patient and even delighted attention of the opposers of those views, which he conscientiously entertained. He was gifted in prayer, and notwithstanding his buoyancy in private, which some thought approached at times to levity, no one who really knew him could doubt his personal piety.

“ But a short time before his death, we had listened to his voice, with which we were all familiar, in discoursing upon ‘The Church of God.’ Some months previous to this time, he preached a truly eloquent sermon, on the forenoon of a communion Sabbath, from these words, ‘Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ The audience was more affected by this discourse, than by any other delivered by him. He was more than usually animated, and his addresses at the tables were appropriate and melting. Among the last sermons that he preached to our people was one from these words, ‘Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.’ ”

The Rev. William J. Gibson, D.D., recently of

Williamsburg, and a near neighbor of Brother M'Ginnes, has sent me the following very acceptable communication :—

“ I am much pleased that you have it in contemplation to publish a sketch of the life of our late worthy and much respected and beloved brother, the Rev. James Y. M'Ginnes.

“ You are right in supposing that my relations to him were intimate during at least a part of the time he was a member of the Presbytery of Huntingdon. Before his coming within our bounds, and taking charge of one of our congregations, I had no acquaintance with him. My intercourse with him was quite intimate for the last two or three years of his life. Yet, I do not suppose that I could give you any new views of his character, beyond what all his brethren of our Presbytery can testify to, with much fewer opportunities for observation, and less intimate relations. For this was one of the excellencies of his character, that he was at once perfectly transparent, being frank in his disposition, and without disguise. You knew the man at the first interview, and all that after-acquaintance could certify you of was, that he was the same man still.

“ As to his public virtues and excellencies, his characteristics as a gifted and eloquent preacher, all who ever heard him will tell you, if on these points you needed any testimony ; but I, with no less appreciation of his endowments as a preacher, can testify that his social and private virtues were not less conspicuous than his public talents. At all times he

was found to be a cheerful, pleasant, and open-hearted companion. His own house was the place where he was pre-eminently to be seen as the kind, courteous, and hospitable friend. Unostentatious, he was nevertheless lavish of his hospitality; and his guest felt at once as fully at his ease, as if in the house of his own brother. There was nothing sordid or contracted in all his character. The little meannesses and sordid traits of character, which sometimes obscure even considerable talents, had no place in this beloved brother; and beloved, I may say, more on account of his freedom from this alloy, and of his noble and generous disposition, than for his admitted admirable and acceptable public talents.

“As I appreciated highly his social and private virtues, so I had occasion to know of his faithful, laborious, and self-denying discharge of his public duties. He was never disposed to spare himself, even on occasions when he might well have done so, and when, perhaps, prudence would have dictated the propriety of some rest. I have known him to appoint extra services for himself on communion seasons, at different points of his congregation, in the evenings, while his assistant was engaged in preaching in the church, or in some other central point of the congregation. And this attracted my particular notice, as he never was, during the time of my acquaintance with him, in full health, and was readily overcome by a little unusual labor. These appointments he never failed to meet, and on the two occasions which I witnessed, I thought them in-

judicious in one of such an infirm constitution, and the event in both cases proved my private views correct,—on both occasions he was unfitted for the services of the next day. I mention the facts, therefore, not to commend them to general imitation, but to show how his heart was in his appropriate work, and how laborious and self-denying he was in the performance of it.

“Upon the whole, with regard to our departed Brother M’Ginnes, I held his character in the highest estimation in private and in public, as a man, and as a Christian minister. He had few superiors as an earnest and eloquent preacher, and he was most attractive in ordinary life as a companion and a friend. No doubt he had his faults and infirmities—who has not?—but his excellencies were numerous and prominent, and far overbalanced all ordinary defects of character. Indeed, if he had any great defects of character, I was not in a condition to notice them, as my sincere and hearty affection for the man closed my eyes to all common blemishes. I mourned greatly the removal of such a brother from our association, and from the Church of God on earth, ‘a burning and a shining light.’ Few like him in all respects are left.

“Let it be our prayer that God may in the future raise up many such ministers; and I am sure his sainted spirit, if now present, would also add—and more abundantly endowed for and devoted to the work of the ministry, than he whose gifts and graces were of no ordinary character.”

REFLECTIONS.

FROM the preceding narrative we may learn—

I. THE ADVANTAGES OF A PIOUS ANCESTRY.—The children of believing parents, from their very constitution, are ordinarily more hopeful subjects of salvation, than are the children of the vicious and depraved. For, though “shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin,” and thus “by nature the children of wrath, even as others,” yet they start into being with nobler powers, and more susceptible of improvement, and so furnishing more hope of their ultimate salvation.

Mental and moral powers are as much hereditary as physical; every lineament of the one as well as of the other, has its counterpart in the parent. The laws that regulate our higher nature are as uniform and certain in their results as those that regulate our physical being. Hence family resemblances are as striking from their mental and moral peculiarities, as from the outlines of their bodies. In both cases, the old adage holds true, “Like parent, like child.” Thus parents occupy a very responsible position, and should be very guarded as to what feelings they cherish, as also, as to what habits they form, and what examples they set.

But a pious ancestry is a great blessing, not only because children commence life with a nobler being,

but also because they thus start under circumstances far more favorable than do others. They are then favored with an early religious training. This is an advantage unspeakably great. Then, when their minds are most susceptible of impression, the holy precepts of the gospel are instilled into them, accompanied with godly examples and believing prayers. These, in connexion with good principles, are the very best legacy any parent can leave his children. They are far better than riches, or than any earthly good. And yet how many parents manifest more anxiety to leave to their children property of some kind, than this better portion,—are more eager to enrich than to save them. Truly wise and blessed are those who, like faithful Abraham, “command their children, and their households after them, to keep the way of the Lord;” or, like Joshua, resolve, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Still farther, the divine promise is attached to such an ancestry. God says to believing parents, “I will be a God to thee, and unto thy seed after thee.” Again, “The promise is unto you, and to your children.” And again, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” All these truths were verified in the case of Mr. M’Ginnes. He was gifted by nature. He was religiously educated, and in him were the promises fulfilled; as well said his father upon the joyful intelligence of the conversion of his son. He acknowledged the event to be the gift of God in answer

to his prayers for him, and expressed his matured conviction of the faithfulness of God as a covenant-God.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN BECOMING EARLY FAMILIAR WITH A FORM OF SOUND WORDS.—It should never be neglected in any household of the covenant. It is one of the appointed instrumentalities of God for the conversion and edification of our families. It has often been honored of God as such. Neglecting it, we expose our children to great injury, if not to final ruin. They will then be likely to be “carried about with every wind of doctrine.” The memorizing of Scripture, and of the Shorter Catechism, cannot be too much insisted upon in all our households. The benefits of this course will be long felt in after years. Many, who in their early years found the catechism a dry task, have in their riper years greatly rejoiced, that they were early required to become familiar with it. If it is not committed to memory when we are young, it will most likely be neglected ever after. Family catechizing is becoming too much in our day a mere byword. The good old practice of our faithful ancestors, catechizing all the family every Sabbath evening, has fallen into too much disuse. It needs to be speedily and fully revived. It is fraught with blessings of inconceivable value. No child knows what he will be in after years, and no parent knows for what his child is fitting. It may, therefore, be of the very highest importance that he

become early familiar with our doctrinal standards, and that he have his youthful mind well stored with the precious truths of God's holy word—that he may be fitted to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. He will be thus preparing for greater usefulness.

So it was with our departed brother. His early training—his early familiarity with the precepts of the Bible, and with the standards of our church—was of incalculable benefit to him in all his future life. Both he, and his parents, were fully rewarded for all their toil and care. God will set his seal of approbation to such fidelity. “Go, and do thou likewise.”

III. THE PRECIOUSNESS OF REVIVALS OF RELIGION, ESPECIALLY IN LITERARY INSTITUTIONS.—No tongue can express the joy and blessedness of one powerful work of grace in either an academy or a college; and no created mind can measure its hal-
lowed influence: eternity alone can fully develope its wide and widely increasing blessings. It fills not only earth, but heaven, with rejoicing. Every true convert is himself happy, and many a parent's heart is made to leap for joy, as he exclaims, “For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.” And it is written, “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth”—how much more joy, then, must there be in heaven over many sinners that repent, and who

are destined to be polished shafts in the Almighty's quiver.

The benefits of revivals of religion in literary institutions, are seen not only upon those institutions themselves, in elevating the standard of piety therein, and in the hopeful conversion of many among the impenitent and unbelieving; but they are also seen in the increase of the number of candidates for the ministry, whose growing influence for good cannot be estimated. This was the case with the revival that occurred at Jefferson College in 1834-5. Out of the thirty or forty hopeful converts at that time, a goodly number, among whom was Brother M'Ginnes, devoted themselves to the arduous and self-denying work of the holy ministry. So, also, in the revival of 1851 at Shade Gap, not less than eight of those who professed their faith and hope in Christ, purposed to enter the ministry. And only the last year, a friend writes, "Jefferson has been blessed with a precious season of revival. It began on the day set apart for special prayer. . . About forty-five students have professed a hope. Many, who had not thought of it, or who were undecided, are now looking forward to the study of the ministry. I trust thousands shall rejoice, not only through time, but through eternity's ceaseless ages, and praise God for this revival." Oglethorpe University, under the care of the Synod of Georgia, has a similar history of grace to record. President Talmadge writes: "Of the senior class, consisting of fifteen, all but one pro-

fessed a hope in Christ. Of those, a large majority have selected the Christian ministry as their chosen work. A spirit of self-consecration, and an interest in foreign missions, have been awakened throughout the institution, which promise happy results." Dr. Anderson, the President of Miami University, Ohio, thus writes. "We had a very precious revival of religion in our Institution, just after the day of special prayer, which was the means of bringing about fifty young men to the acknowledging of Christ. There are now in this Institution about one hundred professors of religion, of whom sixty or seventy are looking forward to the ministry."

These are but samples of what occur in every revival in all our literary institutions. The very choicest of our youth are thus led to serve the Church in an official capacity. Who will not, then, long and pray continually for the outpouring of God's Spirit upon all the institutions of learning in our land, that many of our young men, who are pursuing their studies in those institutions, may be called and qualified by the grace of God for the work of the ministry? This is our only hope in this the time of our great destitutions, both at home and abroad, of an adequate supply of whole-souled, able, and efficient ministers. There must be more fervent and believing prayer, in the closet, the family, and the house of God, that the salt of divine grace may be cast into those fountains of influence, as well as more hearty consecration of children to God, before the wants of our be-

loved Zion shall be supplied. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

IV. THE MINISTRY OUGHT TO BE SUPPORTED. One of the abounding evils existing in the Church, at the present day, is the feeble support of the gospel ministry. It is because the Church, at this period of her unparalleled temporal prosperity, comes so far short of supplying the wants of her own pastors, that many pious young men, it is believed, turn their thoughts to other employments, rather than to serve her in the ministry. Next to the want of the powerful workings of the Spirit of God among us, and especially in our literary institutions, in answer to habitual, importunate prayer, is the inadequate support of the ministry the grand cause of so few additional "burning and shining lights" being raised up in Christ's spiritual temple;—the reason why the number of candidates for the sacred office is decreasing, rather than rapidly increasing every year, as the age, the state of the Church, and the world imperatively demand.

We could not expect else, from such neglect and abuse of Christ's ascension gift. A different result would be miraculous. It would be God's acting without his usual divinely appointed agents. Although Oregon, Texas, California, New Mexico, and the wastes of Zion in our own land, call, trumpet-tongued, for help in their destitute condition; and although, abroad, in the wonderful providence of God, addi-

tional overturnings have occurred, and Papal Europe, as well as Africa and India, and the three hundred millions of China, are anxiously seeking the light of truth, are extending to us a hearty welcome, are bidding us enter their coasts and their capitals, and scatter abroad "the leaves of the tree of life which are for the healing of the nations;" yet, it cannot be expected that there will be an adequate supply of right-minded and well-qualified ministers, while the Church is so recreant to the trust imposed upon her, and heeds so little one of the plainest dictates of reason and revelation. Says a late writer—and there is more truth, human and divine, in it than some seem disposed to admit—"While so many avenues to usefulness and honor, with respectability and worldly competence, or even wealth, are open to young men; while the life of the theological student is such as it is; while the ministry presents the gloomy prospect of poverty, want, embarrassment, and cankering care; a destitute old age, after a life of hard labor, and a penniless surviving family; is it any wonder that so very few of our promising Christian young men, are willing to give themselves to this work? The heart of generous piety may face perils by land, and perils by sea, the martyr's block and stake; but not starveling poverty, and all the other ills the ministry of the present day is heir to.'"

Talent is capital, and it should secure to its possessor not only respect but profit, as much so as any other species of capital. And just in proportion to

the frequency, willingness, and ability of ministerial labor, ought there to be a corresponding willingness and effort on the part of the Church, to render a full equivalent; as much so as is the case in any other profession. Simple justice demands it. And yet, it seems to be taken, too often, for granted, that a minister's labors are charitable efforts, because he is engaged in a good work. Hence it is that many persons, in comfortable circumstances themselves, attend upon the faithful and arduous labors of their pastor, without contributing anything at all towards his support; and others are found contributing the merest trifle to it, without regard to his personal and social relations, as important and essential to be observed as those of any other human being in the community. But all this results either from selfishness, ignorance, or negligence.

The disposition also manifested in too many of our congregations to promise at best but a feeble support to their pastors, and then to fulfil but partially these promises, or to meet a large part of them in the way of "bargain and sale," at a high percentage of profit to themselves, is fraught with serious inconvenience, if not injustice, to the pastor and his family. It is a sin and a shame for a man of education, talents, and piety, to be consuming his best energies in the service of the Church with a mere pittance of compensation; his nose, in consequence, being continually kept at the grindstone, and his increasing family scarcely living while he lives, and being al-

most wholly unprovided for when he dies. The case of Brother M'Ginnes in these respects is only one out of hundreds that could be as fully sketched.

There are, it is true, some honorable exceptions, where congregations are faithful in discharging their assumed obligations, and, that he "may be free from worldly cares and avocations," cheerfully do for their pastor "whatever else they see needful for the honor of religion, and his comfort while among them;" and Mr. M'Ginnes's own case had its "sunny side." His flock at Shade Gap is, like the conies, "but a feeble folk;" yet, by numerous acts of kindness, and by their liberal effort to provide for his family a parsonage as their own home, they almost imperceptibly gained his affections and bound them to him by the cords of love. But the evil complained of, in its various phases, is too common in the most of our churches. Wealth pours her full horn, filled from many sources, into the barns and storehouses of the several members of our flocks, while the pastors of those flocks seem to be forgotten and unknown. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

But God is punishing the Church for such neglect of his servants. Because of it many congregations are "weak and sickly" among us: candidates for the ministry,—“faithful men, able to teach others”—are decreasing; while the Church is either deprived, in part, of the labors of those whom God hath "counted faithful, putting them into the ministry;" because

they have been compelled to devote their attention to other employments also, besides the ministry, in order to secure a "competent worldly maintenance," which their stinted salaries do not afford; or she is deprived of them altogether, as we have had too mournful evidence of for several years past, in pastors being overworked amidst their anxieties and toils; and, their energies being exhausted, they have ceased entirely their earthly labors, even at an early age. God evidently has a controversy with his Church. The fault, however, of the present lamentable state of things in regard to the ministry, is surely hers, and not God's. There is an Achan in the camp. There has been the coveting and the hiding of "a goodly Babylonish garment, and shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold." There has been a keeping back part of the price that belonged to the Lord's treasury. Ephraim has been joined to his idols. Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed the covenant which God commanded them. Otherwise Zion would not be so troubled, and visited with such spiritual "blasting and mildew."

Wherever this evil referred to exists, it should be speedily remedied. If it is not, we have reason to fear that we shall be a sinking and dying church, instead of a flourishing vine. The enemy will come in upon our Zion like a flood, and there will be none to lift up a standard against him. Her hedges will be broken down, so that all they which pass by the way will pluck her. The boar out of the wood will

waste her, and the wild beast of the field will devour her. Many will say, Here is she that forsook the commandment of the Lord. How is she fallen!

To many churches, proper views and right practice on the subject of ministerial support, would be like "life from the dead." It must be remembered, too, that circumstances have changed very much from what they once were. Owing to the abundance and cheapness of money now in our country, to the multiplied facilities for spending it, to the growing prosperity and taste of all classes, to the advanced prices of living, and to the multiplied wants of the Church and the world, demanding imperatively an increase of our charities, six or eight dollars now will hardly go as far as four or five dollars formerly did. So that no congregation, that has been blessed of God in temporal things, should think of offering a pastor now a salary of a less amount than six or eight hundred dollars. Any thing less will not, can not, be an adequate support for a minister with a family. Instead of the average sum for the support of the ministry at this day, being between three and four hundred dollars, it ought rather to be between six and eight hundred dollars. And where any congregation is really so poor that it cannot promptly pay its pastor five or six hundred dollars, this amount ought to be secured to him by the Church at large, of which he is a minister, and of which that congregation is but an integral part. And the Church can do this without

any pecuniary sacrifice, and that, too, without diminishing in the least her contributions to other objects of benevolence. God has bestowed upon her wealth abundant for both. All that is wanted is an increase of light, and of the Spirit of her divine Redeemer.

Our Saviour recognised the same principle for which we are contending when he sent his disciples forth to preach the gospel. They were not to secure their living by begging or by engaging in some secular employment, but they were to receive it as a just compensation for their labors; "for," says he, "the laborer is worthy of his hire." And Paul's argument to the Corinthian Christians, setting forth the rights of Christian ministers, is plain and in point here: "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."*

* Since the above was written, the same subject was discussed in both the Synods of Philadelphia, and New Jersey, at their late sittings; as, also, able articles presented in both the Presbyterian, and the Presbyterian Banner, of October 29th, 1853; and it is gratifying to see that similar views to those above have been expressed. Says the writer in the Banner, "If God has *ordained*

V. SHORT LIVES ARE OFTEN EMINENTLY USEFUL LIVES.—Some persons from their very constitution cannot live long, and especially amidst undue care and toil. Their physical and easily-excited organization soon wears out. But such persons are all life while they do live; and they often accomplish a great deal, whether for good or evil, while they do last, far more than many who live much longer. “Chatterton wrote all his beautiful things, exhausted all hopes of life, and saw nothing better than death at the age of eighteen. Burns and Byron died in their thirty-seventh year, when, perhaps, the strength of their genius was over. Raphael, after filling the world with divine beauty, perished also at thirty-seven. Mozart earlier. These might have produced still greater works, but Nature’s work was done.”

In the ministry, too, there are those who are dropped among us, as it were, from heaven, for a little season, like Martyn, Brainerd, M’Cheyne, Hewitson, Summerfield, Lowrie, and others, to show us what can be done for God and the well-being of precious souls in a short time; to show us what it is

that they who preach the gospel shall live of it, then it follows as a general law upon the subject, that only they *who live* of the gospel, *only* they who receive a competent support, can continue to preach. The final result of a neglect to support ministers, must be an entire destitution of this class of men. A dearth of candidates must therefore be regarded as one of the greatest calamities which can befall our unhappy world, and one of the most unmistakeable evidences that the Great Head of the Church is frowning upon his people for their worldliness.

to work with all our might while the day lasts, to put to shame all drones in the ministry, and to stir up all to more zealous and devoted effort. Such, we believe, was the subject of the preceding sketch. Mr. M'Ginnes was no ordinary man. His life was brief, but in it he accomplished much. He was a living exhibition of not only what a zealous, liberal, and devoted Christian ought to be, but also what a faithful and earnest minister of the gospel should be. He seemed to be "always thinking, always reading, always writing, always preaching, always acting." He lived in earnest. With his unceasing activity, his life was one of earnestness—of indomitable energy. This was, as already intimated, his peculiar characteristic, and what, perhaps, more than anything else, goaded on by a constant pressure of anxiety and responsibility, wasted away his feeble frame. In reference to the great object ever before his eye—the honour of his Divine Master, by the growth of piety in his own soul, and by the intellectual and moral well-being of others,—his purpose was fixed. He could well adopt the language of Paul, "This one thing I do." Such holy energy produced an enterprising, elevated, and sanctified spirit, but it exhausted his vitality. It drank up his life-blood.

In his case, however, as in that of many others, God designed that a short life should be an eminently useful life. He was early called from the field of his labors, but he was one of those who could say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my

course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." And of him it may well be written, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

VI. AND LASTLY, THE CHRISTIAN GLORIFIES GOD IN HIS DEATH AS WELL AS IN HIS LIFE.—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be," is the divine promise. God never forsakes his chosen people. "When thou passest through the waters," he says, "I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." He affords grace just as it is needed, so that when the good man meets his fate, it is—

"Quite on the verge of heaven."

Hence, it has been said that there is "dying grace," as well as grace for living. Hence it is that the saint, even though frail and emaciated, can triumph over death, exclaiming, "Oh, death, where is thy sting? Oh, grave, where is thy victory?" "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "To die is gain." This was the spirit and language of our departed brother in his dying hour. In such a state

of mind he could well say to those around him, "Come and see how a Christian can die." "I want you, my friends, to know that I die leaning on the righteousness of Christ alone." "Another pang, and then away beyond the stars." Thus was his fervent prayer, often repeated, answered, that his "sun might not go down under a cloud," and that he might "glorify God in his death."

But the influence of that death was not confined to those who witnessed it. The death of Brother M'Ginnes is as memorable as any event in his life, and has affected many hearts. A Sabbath or two later than this, the Lord's Supper was to be administered at Williamsburg, Pennsylvania, and Mr. M'Ginnes was expected as an assistant. But on that Sabbath he was, doubtless, worshipping the Saviour "face to face," and drinking the wine "new" with him in his heavenly kingdom. On the very next Wednesday evening following his decease, Brother Gibson was under the painful necessity of announcing their loss to his disappointed congregation. He writes thus, "Brother M'Ginnes was under engagement to aid me at our next communion season. It was at hand, and I remember, at our usual Wednesday evening lecture next following his decease, announcing the melancholy intelligence which I had just received, in connexion with the expectation we had entertained, of enjoying his assistance at our approaching communion services. It was a great shock to the congregation as well as to myself, and, indeed,

unfitted us all for the regular course of lecture that I had been in the habit of pursuing. Brother M'Ginnes was very popular in our congregation, as, indeed, he was in all the congregations, and the disappointment was great, and the grief sincere, that his eloquent tongue was silenced for ever in the church on earth." All his brethren, and their flocks, were taken by surprise at the news of his death, hearing suddenly of it, without having known anything of his previous sickness. They were all filled with sorrow. They felt that a great man in Israel,—one loved, respected, and eminently useful, in the very prime of life,—had fallen. They felt, too, that, humanly speaking, he could illy be spared, that his post of efficiency and usefulness could not well be filled. But he who "holdeth the stars in his right hand," knoweth what is best for his Zion. He lifteth up one, and putteth down another; he saith to this man live, and to this one die. Yet, in every event, he designs that his purposes of wisdom and mercy shall be accomplished. He surely doeth all things well. "Be still and know," says he, "that I am God. I will be exalted among the heathen. I will be exalted in the earth."

What the Rev. John Lloyd, a most excellent missionary to the Chinese,—himself now in glory also,—said of his martyred brother, the Rev. Walter M. Lowrie, we may use as appropriate to Brother M'Ginnes: "We know that God had endowed him with a noble intellect, had given him a sound judgment, had bestowed upon him much grace, and had emi-

nently fitted him for a high station in the great harvest field. We knew all this, and felt that we could not spare him. But God's thoughts and ways are not as ours. He has taught us that he can do without us, even the best of us. He has no need of our poor assistance. When he sees fit, he calls us to himself. He has called our brother thus. We idolized him. God has rebuked us. But he has taken him to himself. He is happy beyond conception. This is our consolation."

Mr. Lowrie's death,—dying when he did and as he did,—has, we believe, by the sympathy, interest, and effort it has excited in behalf of the missionary cause, advanced rather than retarded it. And, in the providence of God, may do more for its greater enlargement than if his life had been spared much longer.

So with our Brother M'Ginnes. Useful as he was in life, much as he had done to honor his Master, we think we venture not too much, when we say, that his death has done more for the glory of God, than any act of his life; if not more than his future life would have done had it been prolonged. Dying when he did—with such a character, so ripe, so tender, so beloved; when so much honor was ready to be given him on every side; and dying as he did—at his own home, after such emolument and success, unexpectedly, in the midst of his beloved pupils and charge, with such a clear mind, and with such holy triumphs of faith in Jesus—we think we may safely say, that there are few deathbeds like his; so deeply impres-

sive ; so superior in rapt thought and feeling ; and so rich in all the elements which constitute a Christian's triumph over the last enemy. It has made an impression not only upon my own mind, but upon a multitude of others, that will not be effaced by time.

Many hearts will be enkindled at his funeral pile, as they read these pages, or gaze upon the tomb where his dust reposes. Many will glow with increased love to Jesus and dying souls, as they contemplate not only his devoted life, but also his rapturous death ; while the prayer will spontaneously be breathed from each heart, " Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

SERMONS

BY THE

REV. JAMES Y. M'GINNES.

SERMON I.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.

“Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”—2 TIM. i. 10.

“KNOW thyself,” was the maxim of a heathen philosopher, and there can be none of greater importance, for without intimate self-acquaintance all other knowledge will be of but little use. And yet how few engage in this appropriate study of mankind.

Men range the whole field of thought and science. They will learn the nature and the habits of the inferior creatures; they will develop the principles of inanimate nature; and yet will overlook the wonderful mechanism of their own matchless frames, and live and die in profound ignorance of those rational

and intelligent minds by which they are distinguished from the brutes that perish. Men study everything, they know everything, better than themselves. Though no subject can be more interesting, or more worthy the exercise of those exalted powers with which they are endowed, there is none, perhaps, by the great mass of mankind so little understood.

“The proper study of mankind,” says a celebrated writer, “is man.” Nothing in the world of nature displays so many proofs of creative wisdom and goodness—nothing is better calculated to exhibit the declarative glory of his Omnipotent Author. Man is a compound being, formed of body and soul. And though originally formed of dust, yet is he the perfection of animal nature, combining all that is valuable and beautiful in our lower creation, and, in the expressive language of Scripture, is “fearfully and wonderfully made.” With form erect, with head exalted, with countenance divine, he came forth from his Maker’s hands, and stood the lord of this lower creation. We cannot enlarge on the anatomical wonders of the human frame, nor would it accord with our present purpose; but if you would have enlarged views of the divine goodness, if you would be lost in astonishment at the displays of the divine power and wisdom, study the human form with its varieties of instruments and functions, all suited to the great end, and carrying out the purposes of their first formation. Suffice it to say, that in the human system there are two hundred and forty-five bones,

and four hundred and forty-six muscles—the former acting as so many timbers in the framework of the tabernacle, the latter as so many instruments of its motion. There are ten thousand nerves, the seats of sensation; as many veins and arteries, acting as so many channels to carry the red current of life to and from its great fountain, the heart. There are one hundred thousand glands, secreting the necessary juices for the nourishment of the system; and over the surface of the skin not less than two hundred millions of pores, acting as so many avenues of sickness or health, of life or death. How amazing too are the functions of the heart. That organ contracts and beats four thousand times every hour, and, during that time, there passes through it two hundred and fifty pounds of blood. And this pulsation is taking place, sleeping or waking, from the first faint cry of infancy to the last expiring sigh of extreme old age. Who can examine this complex, marvellous machine, and not see in it the wonderful works of God? How feeble, and yet how strong. How delicate, and yet how capable of endurance. How easily deranged, and yet how active for years.

“Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long.”

But man is a rational, intelligent being, and has a soul as well as a body. Whilst he possesses instincts and feelings in common with the inferior animals, he is endowed with a reason which far surpasses every

instinct of the brute, and avails for every contingency. In instinct there is no improvement or advancement. The mere animal races just act as they have done for generations. They have no inventive power; they make no new discoveries. But the mind and reason of man are ever progressing, and no limits can be set to the sphere of their operations. He is ever ranging the world in search of new discoveries, or is taxing his ingenuity to multiply useful or curious inventions. With the telescope he can sweep the starry heavens, and bring within the range of his vision hitherto unknown creations of omnipotence. Availing himself of the magnifying powers of the microscope, he can discover a world of animated nature upon a single leaf of the forest, and in a drop of water with its numerous inhabitants behold an ocean in miniature.

With the mariner's compass in his hand he can guide his way across perilous oceans, and hold intercourse with the inhabitants of the most distant climes. By a practical use of his philosophy, he can make the elements of nature do his bidding and administer to his comfort, even plucking the lightning from the thundercloud and making it the messenger of his thoughts, and the servant of his will. Such is the high pre-eminence on which he stands, such the mighty gulf that separates him from the brutal natures that surround him, and that act merely from the impulses of an innate and immutable instinct. Yet, after all, man is but a mortal. This light of hea-

ven which flashes forth in the scintillations of his genius, so astonishing to himself and others, is but like the course of the meteor across the midnight sky; or like the dazzling brilliancy of a moment followed by the settled gloom of the grave. The active powers sink into indolence; the teeming brain ceases to treasure up its world of thought; and the man, who but yesterday may have been with us, the busy, bustling denizen of earth, has fallen the victim of a destiny which none may escape, and has left the world of light and life for the land of silence and forgetfulness.

The grave is "the house appointed for all living." A decree has gone forth from the high court of heaven, more immutable than the laws of the Medes and Persians, universal in its application, inevitable in its execution: "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Ever since the curse was pronounced upon the guilty pair in Eden, has death been in our world. Generation after generation has fallen beneath his unerring dart, until our earth has become one vast charnel-house; and the very dust beneath our feet was once warmed with life that has fled. And is this havoc of death to continue for ever? Are the mighty ruins of these once beautiful bodies never to be repaired and again tenanted by their active and heaven-born inhabitants? Does annihilation follow death? Is this constant flow of thought and activity to cease for ever in its course, and this light of reason, that assimilates our nature to the great God, to be for ever blotted out in darkness?

Was the earth created that it might be one eternal graveyard for the succession of mortals that teem upon its surface? Is there no other state, no other home, no other destiny? Are those hopes of immortality that so often wing their heavenward flight, and long to fold their weary wings in some better land, but the mockery of an unreal vision; the impulsive grasp of unsatisfied souls at treasuring that which can never be theirs? Then may we ask with the Psalmist, "Lord, wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?" What is our being worth, if it must be resigned so soon? Why the creation of these vast powers, if they are so soon to enter the land of forgetfulness, and to shrink back by the same Almighty word, that called them forth, into their original nothingness? Do these questions force themselves upon you? And are you panting, with all the eagerness of one who seeks a higher destiny than earth can give him, to lift the veil that separates the visible from the invisible, and to know what hope of life there is for you, beyond the last convulsive throb of dissolving nature, and the dreamless slumbers of the tomb? Let me lift up that veil. Let me open those gloomy portals of the grave that lie before you, and see if impenetrable darkness stops your eager gaze. Or, catch you not that ray of light that comes streaming along through its dim caverns from the far-off regions that lie beyond? Look again at that massive pillar that stands far down in the dim valley. The rays of that heavenly light that just now met

your gladdened vision are playing upon it, and revealing that glorious inscription, chiselled by no mortal hand, "Life and immortality have been brought to light."

But away with all these figures of an earth-born fancy. That light is the Sun of righteousness; that pillar is the gospel; and that "life and immortality" is the destiny of the panting spirits within you.

This is a discovery which baffled the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the ancients. The notions of their philosophers concerning even the immortality of the soul, were vague and contradictory. And many, to rid themselves of the difficulties that kept pace with their researches, reasoned themselves into atheism, and made the world the sport of chance, and the grave the final home of both body and soul. It is a discovery that science has never revealed. Science, that has watched the movements, and learned the nature of the tiny insect that finds a universe in a raindrop, that fixes the stars in their orbits, and calculates with as much certainty, as we do the hour of to-morrow's rising sun, their phases and their distances—science is here at fault, and candidly acknowledges that these are secrets into which it has never penetrated, and mysteries it has never unravelled.

No, the light that flings its heavenly halo over the grave, and illumines our pathway to the skies, is not the light of science but of religion. Not the dim tapers by which the philosophers of the world grope

their way through it, but that glorious light of heaven, which reveals the way of life so clearly that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

That resurrection of the body, which prepares it for immortality, is not discoverable from the light or the laws of nature ; and is believed only as matter of revelation. The heathen sages of antiquity never deemed it possible, much less supposed it certain.

The philosophers of Athens ridiculed the Apostle Paul, when, in his memorable sermon before them, upon Mars Hill, he broached this, to them, unheard of and absurd doctrine. They regarded it as some idle superstition of the Jews, and refused to hear him even for a moment, attempt to explain or to defend it. When their bodies were committed to the earth to moulder and to mingle with their original elements, they looked upon it as their final destiny, and never dreamed that these frail, dying tabernacles could be reared anew in the bloom and vigor of immortal youth and beauty. But what a light does Christianity shed over the gloom of the grave. Hear what the voice from heaven proclaims for them that sleep in the dust of the earth: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John v. 28, 29. "These bodies may be sown in corruption, but they shall be raised in incor-

ruption : they may be sown in dishonor, but they shall be raised in glory ; they may be sown in weakness, but they shall be raised in power ; they may be sown a natural body, but they shall be raised a spiritual body." 1 Cor. xv. 42-44.

The immortality of the soul is not so difficult to be believed, and hence the wisest and the most intelligent of the heathen admitted its probability, and even endeavored to substantiate its certainty by arguments, more or less plausible and sound. But what were their reasonings without revelation? What were all their arguments, but merely presumptuous conclusions that what they greatly desired to be true, was really so? The Socrateses and Platos of Greece, after all their searches, were more perplexed on this point than the simplest, most unlettered Christian in this favored land of evangelical light. "Death," says Socrates, who was confessedly the wisest and the most moral of the heathen, "either reduces us to nothing, or, as some say, it conveys us from this world into some other region." And this was said by him but a few hours before he met that death from the unrighteous sentence of his judges.

Though on the margin of the shoreless ocean, dark mists hung over it which even his keen eye could not penetrate ; and he makes the plunge with all the uncertainty of a gloomy peradventure. How much wiser in that which so intimately concerns us is the simplest disciple of the Saviour, than the learned and renowned Socrates! And how happy would he have been, had he enjoyed one glimmering of that light against which

so many multitudes around us shut their eyes and affect to despise !

As immortality is a common prerogative; as it is a doctrine in which men of all ranks and classes are concerned, and elevates the simple ploughman or mechanic to share in the glorious destiny of a Bacon and a Newton, a common revelation was necessary; one that would level itself to every mind, and teach every child of Adam that there had been enkindled within him a spark that should burn with quenchless ardor, when the stars of heaven should be blotted out, and the sun himself set in everlasting eclipse. And this has the gospel done. It has come to make up for every defect of human reason, and to add the testimony of Him "that cannot lie" to all those pantings after endless life that make the soul "shrink back upon itself, and startle at destruction."

But nature, and reason, and revelation, do not stand in contradiction. The Creator of the one is the Author of the other, and all his manifestations must necessarily harmonize; and though our reasonings may not carry us as far as revelation in this matter, yet they tend the same direction; they are helping to work out the same great results.

We argue the immortality of the soul from its very nature. It is immaterial, spiritual, and unlike mere matter which acts only as it is acted upon; it is essentially active, thinks and wills from its own inherent impulses and emotions. It is this that allies

man to angels, and makes him emphatically the offspring of the Godhead. If the body be of "the earth, earthy," the mind is an immediate emanation from the Deity, and should therefore partake of the nature of Him who only hath life and immortality. These are the excellency of its attributes as distinct from those of the brute that perishes. They spurn the dust; they leap beyond the limited range of earth and time; and, in those sublime contemplations that carry us upward and onward through trackless space, to the throne of God, they love to climb their native skies, and to lose themselves in the vast fountain of "life and immortality" from whence they sprung. And is not this heavenward tendency of the soul, when left untrammelled by earth, but the development of that natural instinct for immortality which the Creator has implanted in its possessor?

Again, we argue the soul's immortality from its capacity for improvement and enjoyment. You can set no limits to the improvement of the human mind. The vessel never bursts from its contents. Its capacities enlarge as they fill up. Mental stores may be amassed, and knowledge acquired almost beyond limitation. Think of a Newton and a Shakspeare in their infancy with minds crude and uncultivated, and then think of the developments of those mighty minds in maturer years. And the capacity for enjoyment keeps pace with that of improvement. The desires of the soul are endless and progressive, and every fresh draft from the spring of pure and ra-

tional pleasure only excites greater longings, and induces a more quenchless thirst. Wherefore these lofty powers? Wherefore these ever-growing desires after pure and unalloyed enjoyment, if the soul's life is but as a bubble cast up upon the ocean of eternity to be the sport of a momentary and capricious chance, and then to sink for ever beneath the mass?

We cannot, we dare not, say that the wise and beneficent Creator would mock and illude his rational and intelligent creatures so; besides, man abhors the idea of extinction. A miserable future is preferable to annihilation. Of that future he is emphatically the creature. He feels within him that he is made for eternity. However often his wishes and hopes may be gratified, they never reach their climax. Onward—onward—is the watchword of his soul. The more he partakes, the more he craves. He wishes to enjoy continually, and nothing short of an endless existence seems sufficient to quench his thirst with those ever-refreshing draughts from the fountain of everlasting life.

Again, we argue it from the essential principles of justice and equity. God is holy and just in all his ways. He must necessarily hate and punish sin, and delight in and reward holiness. But behold mankind only in the mirror of this life, and you behold vice transparent, prosperous, gay, arrayed in wealth and power, and faring sumptuously every day. You behold Christian virtue poor, scorned, persecuted, dying by the hand of violence and wickedness. And does God—the Omniscient—see

all this? Is he holy and just, and shall he permit virtue always to be prostrated, and vice to be exalted? No, verily. This is but the state of probation. The world of retribution is to come. Both characters are to be transferred to other spheres, where each are to be judged according to their works, and to receive their appropriate reward.

But after all, these are but presumptive arguments. They may create rational expectation, but they cannot lift up the veil from the unseen, and permit us to gaze upon it with that certainty of vision which removes all doubt. It is revelation alone that demonstrates the important subject. It is revelation alone that solves the mighty problem of man's eternal destiny,—that unbars the gates of the invisible world, and that permits the light of a happy and an eternal heaven to come streaming through its portals upon the land of darkness and of death.

Blessed revelation! How many anxious questions does it answer! How many perplexing doubts does it solve! How many glorious hopes does it awaken in these throbbing hearts! What a heavenly radiance does it throw around the *grave*! There lie the frail barks of human existence, tossed and shattered by the world's tempests, in that peaceful haven, renewing and refitting, under the hands of an Almighty Architect, for a new and a more successful voyage over the shoreless ocean of eternity.

We need not fear to commit our friends to the dust. They are but the temporary captives of a tyrant

whose power is broken. Their prison doors shall one day be thrown open by the mighty power of Him who led "captivity captive," and their dark abodes shall be illuminated by the glorious light of "life and immortality." Even *we* ourselves may put our hand in this "hole of the asp," and play undaunted around this "cockatrice's den." Even *we* may feel this viper fastening upon our mortal parts, and diffusing its stealthy venom through our decaying frames. We shall one day shake it off, and fear no evil, by a joyful resurrection.

The gospel is not only the message of mercy, it is also the revelation of life. It is the history—the wondrous history of Him who wept that man might smile, who died that man might never die. His mediation is the channel through which this life is conveyed—his death, the last crowning act in that series of efforts which has resulted in our victory over the power of death, and in our deliverance from the terrible tyranny of the grave. He who sits enthroned in glory and diffuses bliss unutterable through all the shining ranks that bow before him, he yielded up himself into the hands of this dread enemy, and went down himself a prisoner to the silent shades.

But if he stooped, it was to conquer. If he slept the dreamless sleep of the grave, it was to arise far more mightily than did Samson, from his transient slumber, to break down the gates, and to demolish the strongholds of these dark dominions. If he himself traversed the dark and dreary way through the

gloomy valley, it was to light it up for his humble followers with blessed hopes of "life and immortality" beyond. And this, O fellow-mortals! this is our consolation and security. Jesus has trod the path, and smoothed it for your passage. Jesus, sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened up the dismal mansion, and left an inviting odor in its beds of dust. The dying Jesus—never let the comfortable thought escape you—is your sure protection, your unquestionable passport through the territories of the grave. "He that believeth in me," said Christ to the sorrowing Martha, "though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Go down to the dust in the exercise of this triumphant faith, and you shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers by your dissolution. Your exit is but the end of your frailty, and entrance into perfection. The last sigh of convulsive nature is but the prelude to endless "life and immortality" at God's right hand.

And is all this true—the truth of God that cannot lie? Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of all that he has determined concerning man's final state and destiny, shall pass away until all be fulfilled. And is this spark of life never to be quenched? Is this existence, begun here on earth in the feebleness of infancy, to be spun out through endless duration, and to run a line parallel with that of eternity? What intellect can grasp the mighty subject? What human conception can conceive the

pain, the bliss, the hope, the despair, that may be summed up in such an infinite duration?

How much to an immortal soul does that awful word *eternity* include! Who can set landmarks to limit the dimensions, or find plummets to fathom the unsearchable depths of that which overwhelms our strongest, boldest thoughts, and leaves our imagination to run wild with despair? Arithmeticians may compute the progressions of time, and figure up the centuries that roll by on rapid cycles; astronomers can calculate the number, and have invented instruments by which they can measure the size and distance of the planets, as they wheel on their mighty orbits, but what figures can state, what lines can gauge, the length and breadth of eternity? "It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do?—deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Mysterious, mighty existence! a sum not to be lessened by the largest deductions; an extent not to be contracted by all possible diminutions. None can truly say after the greatest lapse of ages, so much of eternity is gone; for when millions of centuries are elapsed, it is but just beginning.

And here, in the impressive thoughts, if not in the glowing language of the eloquent Davies, let us pause and take a calm survey of this majestic prospect. What an inheritance is this entailed upon a child of dust, a creature of yesterday. This body must soon moulder into dust, but the soul will live unhurt

amidst all the dissolving struggles and convulsions of the tabernacle which it now inhabits. Yea, "these heavens shall pass away with a great noise; these elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth and the things that are therein shall be burnt up," but the soul shall live secure of existence amidst this universal desolation, and shall rise triumphant above this "wreck of matter and crush of worlds."

Men of great projects and sanguine hopes are apt to pause, and take an imaginary survey of what they will do, and what they will be, in the course of their lives. But how often are their projects defeated!—how often are their plans cut short in their execution by the ruthless hand of Death. But here Death himself is conquered; and he who threatened the extinction of our being is himself reduced to annihilation, and life runs on its even tenor, uninterrupted by a single dread of dissolution.

And how much does all this enhance the value of the soul, and make its neglect the veriest infatuation! Immortality! what emphasis—what grandeur in the sound! Give immortality to any being, however insignificant and valueless it may otherwise appear, and you create for it an importance that leaves conception far behind the reality; while the highest angel, if he were but the creature of a day, or even of a thousand years, would be but as a fading flower or as a vanishing vapor, for when the short sum of his existence was past, he would be as truly nothing as if he had never been. What matters it what may

be his lot—let him stand or fall, let him be happy or miserable,—soon dignity or degradation, pleasure or pain, will be to him as if they never existed.

But an immortal, a creature who shall never—never cease to be; who shall grow in endless progression, and expand his capacities, for pleasure or pain, through an endless duration,—what a dignity is thrown around him,—with what a majesty is he invested in our estimation! And am I speaking of myself, and of you, my hearers? Is it the little spark of reason within us that I refer to? We can but tremble at ourselves. We must revere our own dignity. Are we, indeed, never to cease thinking and feeling? Is the wave of this immortal life within us never to cease its restless tide? Is there no sleep for the soul—no dreamless age when it shall forget the past, and cease to anticipate the future? No grave in which it may hide in peaceful repose, until the calamities that are gathering thick upon the universe are wholly overpast? No; for it is action—motion, endless and progressive. It is a sea of thought, that is either to be swept by the gentle gales of paradise above, or lashed into fury by the storms of divine vengeance below.

What is it to us, then, who are formed for an endless existence, what we enjoy or what we suffer in this fleeting world? What imaginable proportion do seventy or eighty years bear to the infinite duration of such a being? They dwindle, they disappear, in comparison with those mighty cycles of years that

shall carry us onward in endless progression through our eternal state. They are but as the small dust of the balance to the vast globe of earth, or to all those vaster globes above us that roll in their orbits through the immensity of space.

And what shall become of us through this immortal duration? This, and this only, is the grand concern of immortals. Politics may have its interesting theories bearing upon human government, and the rights of man. Science may have its perplexing and intricate questions to solve—questions bearing directly upon our life, and health, and comfort in the world. But what are all these to the question of man's eternal destiny? Where is to be our final home? What our final condition? Is happiness to mark our continued progress and development? Are we to be for ever drinking from the pure fountain of knowledge; for ever making discoveries in the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace? Or is eternity to roll its unnumbered ages only to bring with them keener anguish and deeper despair? Are we not only to retain all our capacities, but are these capacities to enlarge with an eternal growth, and for ever tower from glory to glory in heaven, or plunge from depth to depth in hell?

These are awfully momentous questions. Let each of us ask ourselves, in the light of reason, of conscience, and of divine truth, where will our destiny be for ever fixed? Are we reconciled to God? Have we an interest in Christ? Are we prepared for the

fruition of the heavenly state? Without this, even though we may be found here among the rich, honorable, healthy, and merry, our souls can neither be satisfied nor safe. Without this, what shall we do for happiness millions of ages hence, when all earthly enjoyments shall have vanished like a mist of the morning? Without this, the resurrection will be no privilege, and immortality our heaviest curse. Yea, without this, our destiny will be that of a lost spirit, our eternity the home of an abandoned soul.

O what stupendous discoveries, what solemn considerations are presented us in the gospel! Let them alarm our fears, quicken our hopes, and animate all our endeavors. Since we are so soon to launch into this endless and inconceivable state, let us give all diligence to secure our entrance into bliss.

Influenced by those considerations, let our views expand, our affections be exalted, and we ourselves raised above the tantalizing power of perishing things. And let it be the sum of our endeavors to gain the approbation of that blessed Being whose "favor is life," and whose "loving kindness is better than life;" so that at last, we may be gathered to "his presence, where is fulness of joy," and dwell at "his right hand, where are pleasures for evermore."

O where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul?
'Twere vain the ocean depths to sound,
Or pierce to either pole;

The world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh ;
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die.

Beyond this vale of tears
There is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years ;
And all that life is love.
There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath ;
O what eternal horrors hang
Around " the second death !"

Lord God of truth and grace,
Teach us that death to shun,
Lest we be banished from thy face,
And evermore undone.
Here would we end our quest ;
Alone are found in thee,
The life of perfect love, the rest
Of immortality.

SERMON II.

THE TWO ROCKS CONTRASTED.

“For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.”—DEUT. xxxii : 31.

“WHAT is truth?” said Pilate to the innocent Saviour, when arraigned before the bar of that functionary through the malice of his enemies. No inquiry could be more important, and had it been asked in the proper spirit, and from a sincere desire to know its nature, no doubt it would have received a prompt and satisfactory answer. It was in contempt, however, that he asked the question, for without even waiting a reply, he immediately arose and left the judgment hall.

And though we may regret that the query was not answered by the Saviour in form, it was answered by him in fact. Grace and truth not only came by him, but he was the truth itself. He not only taught it, and died to establish it, but his whole life was its embodiment and exemplification. That light of which others, by a long and laborious effort, had struck out, here and there, a single scintillation, that seemed only to dazzle and bewilder those who committed themselves to its guidance, he revealed in a blaze of noontide glory. Wherever he sheds his cheering beams, those shadows, that so long rested upon the moun-

tain tops, and flung their sable pall over the lowly vales; and, amidst the uplifting eye of faith, catches its first glimpse of that world of "life and immortality," whose existence our undying spirits had anticipated, as they turned empty and unsatisfied from the worldliness and vanity of earth.

In Christ, emphatically, "is light, and in him is no darkness at all." And how refreshing is it to the wearied and inquiring soul, to turn from the systems of the philosophers to the plain and simple teachings of the incarnate Son of God. If ever, through the whisperings of unbelief, or the inquietude of passion, she has been tempted to forsake her seat with Mary at the feet of Jesus, and to roam abroad in search of a resting-place more congenial and more safe, how soon, sad and disappointed, does she return, like the trembling dove of Noah, to fold her weary wings upon the bosom of her Saviour, and to nestle closer from "the snare of the fowler" in his benevolent embrace.

Yes, my hearers, that question, so thrillingly interesting to every voyager across this stormy sea of life; that question, over which oracles mumbled their dark sayings, and sages and wise men stood confounded, has been answered, intelligibly and satisfactorily, by Him, who spake and acted as man before or since has never done.

How opportune his appearance in the flesh! How many events and circumstances in the history of the world united to make it, and to mark it as "the ful-

ness of time!" Faint traces of man's original happy condition still remained. Poets had celebrated, in glowing numbers, the excellencies of the golden age; and nations had traced back their origin, through traditionary legends, to fabulous times, when war had not yet hardened nor the accursed lust of gold sensualized the human heart, and when they had sat "every man under his vine, and under his fig tree," "with none to molest or make him afraid."

And this belief, more or less obscure, of the happy primeval condition of man, was diffused through all antiquity, and laid at the foundation of every scheme of religion, from that of the Bible to the veriest delusions of heathenism. With these traditions of the past there still lingered a hope that the world should not always be "subject to vanity."

And the wise and the good wearied themselves to subjugate the moral evil that prevailed, and to bring back the days of heaven upon earth. But "the world by wisdom knew not God." The most gigantic intellects amongst the heathen perplexed themselves in vain efforts to comprehend him. In their searching they could find out neither his nature nor his attributes; neither the mode of access to his presence, nor the means of reconciliation to his favor.

The religions of Jew and Gentile contain within them the elements of their own destruction. Jewish prophecies were hastening to their accomplishment. And the self-made systems of the philosophers had run their course. They had succeeded each other in

such quick succession, as to create in every reflecting mind distrust of the ability of any to cleanse the conscience, and to renovate the hearts of their votaries.

And hence, a desire for something more stable and permanent arose. The world was in an expecting attitude. Oracles, prophecies, and poets—Gentile and Jewish—seemed pointing to some distinguished personage to remove the physical, social, and moral evils that prevailed, and to restore the golden age of peace and happiness. It was at this interesting crisis that Jesus appeared in Judea and Galilee, suddenly springing from the deepest obscurity to astonish the world by his miracles, to reform it by his doctrines, and to save it by his blood. And in him the wants and wishes of mankind met a full and happy gratification. The reception of him and his truth, is present and everlasting salvation; their rejection, the forerunner of fearful, remediless destruction.

Human nature, in its pride of intellect and self-righteousness, may be offended at the obscurity of Christ's origin, the simplicity of his teachings, the humility of his life, and the ignominy of his death. But these are amongst the best evidences of his divine mission, and we might reasonably expect that He, who commits the treasures of his grace to "earthen vessels," would choose "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things

which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence."

If the "Saviour's visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," yet in him were "hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." And if ever that guilt, which has been gathering and blackening until it is ripe for the curse, is to be cancelled, Jesus is to do it; if ever that image, which sin has effaced, is to be reinstated upon the human soul, Jesus is to do it; and if ever those pearly gates, which transgression had barred, are to be re-opened for man's admission to the eternal city of God, Jesus is to do it. Every other foundation, however formed "by art or man's device," shall fail. Every other hope, however cherished and treasured up in his heart of hearts, shall be but as the hope of the hypocrite and as "the giving up of the ghost."

The Bible, and the Bible from its beginning to its end, is the testimony of Jesus. And it is the only chart, by whose guidance the voyager for eternity can avoid the hidden rocks and dangerous whirlpools that lie on either hand, and threaten his destruction. And he who launches upon the troubled sea of life without this unerring guide, is as infatuated as the mariner who leaves his port without a helm to steer his vessel, or an anchor to hold it in safety.

No; *their rock is not as our Rock*. Let but reason speak, and confirm her arguments by the ten thousand

facts which experience has gathered, and they must shut the mouth of every gainsayer, and maintain the transcendent superiority of the God of the Bible over all that have been called gods, and that have been worshipped. The Bible, and the claims of its Author upon our faith and service, challenge the most rigid scrutiny.

There are some timid, narrow-minded Christians, who would have "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation;" and who are ever in dread lest the march of mind and the discoveries of science may perplex us with knotty questions, and unsettle the foundations of our faith. But such fear is idle. Every truth must be sustained by its own evidence. The crucible of the chemist, whatever new combinations it may form, or changes it may make, will not change the law of righteousness, or dissolve the relation between the Sovereign of the universe and the subjects of his moral government. We have no fear that the hammer of the geologist will ever break "our Rock," or that the stratifications which lie at the bases of Sinai and Calvary will ever disprove the solemn transactions witnessed by their summits. And of all this we are willing that our "enemies themselves shall be the judges."

The affirmation of the text was originally made by Moses, with reference to Jehovah of Hosts, and the idols of the nations, when the dangers and the difficulties of the wilderness were past, and when nothing

but the Jordan divided the tribes from the chosen inheritance of their fathers. They who trusted in their idols for succor, and who knew not the power, or despised the majesty of the God of Israel, had united for the destruction of his people, and attacked them on every quarter. But in the strength of Jehovah Nissi, "the Lord their banner," they had returned the charge, and driven them before their victorious arms as "chaff before the wind."

And as the man of God recounts their triumphant march up to the very borders of Canaan, through the swarming hosts of the Amorites and the Hittites, he breaks forth in the exulting language of the text, "their rock is not as our rock; even our enemies themselves being judges." Leaving out of view the gods of the heathen, to which the text primarily refers, we may enlarge the signification of the text, and consider the comparative excellencies of the god of the infidel and the God of the Christian, which is most likely to exalt the character, or to meet the wants and exigencies of man.

I. AS TO THEIR COMPARATIVE EXCELLENCIES.— Faith in the existence of a God lies at the foundation of all religion. And never was there a more stupendous admission. It involves consequences that, growing with an endless progression, shall lay their moulding hand upon the character, and form the destiny of the mind, that credits a proposition so reasonable and so self-evident.

No one to whom this doctrine is presented, but must perceive at once that he is grasping an idea of immense importance, and one that, from the very necessity of its nature, must have infinitely extensive bearings. It solves a thousand mysteries that were otherwise inexplicable. And considered in its relations to the material and immaterial world, to every object in the wide range of thought, it gathers around it an interest which the mind, in its loftiest aspirations, is inadequate to comprehend. Faith in the existence of a God is a dividing line between the territories of light and of darkness,—between a region illumined by the acknowledgment of an all-controlling, self-existent cause, and a region over which hang the clouds and shadows and curses of atheism.

And if there be a God to whom we sustain the relation of rational and dependent creatures, how deeply is our interest and our happiness involved in the views we may form of his nature and character. Any divergency from the right path here must lead us on to irretrievable ruin. And we assert that nowhere can we form so proper conceptions of God, not only in regard to his absolute perfections, but also in reference to his relations to us, as in this book which professes to bring “life and immortality to light.”

For “their rock is not as our rock.” I need scarcely advert to the beauty and force of the figure used by Moses. What better emblem of strength, of stability, of perpetuity, in the wide range of nature,

than the rock? Nor need we stand with the wanderer of the desert beneath the beetling crags of Sinai, or at Horeb's foot, to appreciate or feel its force. Here, in the sublime scenery of the rugged mountains that bound the beautiful vales in which we dwell, may we learn the significance of the metaphor. What mighty changes have here taken place since these rocks of ages first heaved their huge masses to the skies! Deluges have swept by in their wrath, and that which has changed the face of all else, has left them unchanged. For ages the war-whoop and the arrow of the savage have re-echoed through their solitudes, and resounded from their sides. These, too, have passed away to give place to the woodman's axe, and the march of civilization. And yet there those rocks remain in stable perpetuity,—the best, the most appropriate symbol that nature can produce of the Almighty, the self-existent and eternal Jehovah.

Such is not the rock of Israel's enemies, and they who trust *that* shall find their hope to be that of the hypocrite that shall perish, and their "trust a spider's web." And they themselves shall be our judges in this matter.

1st. How uncertain are the attributes of the infidel's God. In the records of Deism there are scarcely two individuals that acknowledge the same God. Their faith is founded on no fixed moral principles, and each is left to form for his worship such a being as his own caprice or fancy may dictate. Who amongst all the masters of infidelity shall an-

swer to your satisfaction that important inquiry, What is God? Which of them will give you any proper conception of his nature and his attributes?

Is he a being of infinite justice, and will every transgression in his government meet with its just recompense of reward? What inquiry more thrillingly interesting to man, and yet what creed of infidelity has ever satisfactorily affirmed or denied the proposition? They wonder and bewilder themselves in a maze of doubt, and cannot tell you whether the grave is the end of human existence, or whether we are to enter a world of retribution beyond its confines.

Is God a being of infinite holiness, demanding the same character in his intelligent worshippers,—or if not sensual himself, as were the gods of the heathens, is he entirely indifferent to their state of mind and character? Can any infidel tell us whether worship is required, and if so, what is needed to make it acceptable in his sight? Instead of giving a satisfactory solution to the difficulty, the writers of Deism either leave it untouched, or advance theories upon the subject the most contradictory and absurd.

In fine, alas! differing with each other and themselves, they have no unerring standard to which we can appeal as the end of all doubt and all strife. For, whilst some have entertained imperfect, yet in some degree just views of God, and have admitted man's accountability, others have indulged in the most gross conceits, and have elevated the nature of

God but little above the sensual and debased idols of the pagans. Not so is it with the being whom Christians worship. What possible perfection can you conceive of that he does not possess? Every excellency calculated to excite our gratitude, induce our homage, call forth our love, or move our fears, are found in him in an infinite degree. They who search the Bible to find an answer to that momentous question, What is God? need not long remain in doubt or darkness.

That light of Heaven which shines upon the sacred page, removes all the mystery that otherwise shrouds this great subject, and reveals to the intelligent, inquiring mind, in terms so plain that he that runneth may read, "what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requireth of man."

Amongst the gods there is none like unto him. And whether we look at each of the various attributes of which his character is composed, or at the whole in glorious combination, we see the indubitable impress of certainty. And whilst the god of Deism is as changeable as the fancy, the caprice, or the depravity of his worshippers, the God of the Christian is in every clime and in every age, "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever."

2d. I remark that the god of the infidel is little more than a mere spectator of events, while the Christian's God is *everywhere* in the exercise of a sustaining, controlling, and all-gracious energy. The deist scouts at the doctrine of a particular providence.

It is much more in accordance with the character of his god to leave his creatures to become the sport of a capricious chance, as bubbles cast upon the surface of the heaving ocean of life, only to be drawn hither and thither by capricious currents, and then to sink for ever beneath the mass.

For he sits among them in indolent majesty, manifesting but little regard for them, and exercising little or no control over the works of his hands. How often do we hear these infidel philosophers, who arrogate to themselves all wisdom, speaking of the laws of nature, and accounting for this or that atmospheric phenomenon or event in the world by a reference to the law of nature, just as if nature was omnipotent, and its laws an eternal *something*,—a kind of fate that acted universally or essentially, uncontrolled and uncontrollable by any intelligible agency whatever. This is downright practical atheism; for if a law of nature be anything else than the rule by which the intelligent Governor of the universe carries out his purposes and plans, we have mistaken the meaning of language altogether, and there is no fixed standard by which the sense of our ideas are to be determined.

If such a doctrine as this be true, how miserable man's present life! How hopeless his future! No supporting arm to lean upon, his own weak powers must battle with the mighty elements that surround him, that are hushed at no word of command, and know no controlling law but their own wild caprice.

Upon his future, no star of promise sheds even the faintest ray. How many thrilling inquiries here crowd upon him! Is that dissolution, whose harbingers are coming thick and fast around him, to bring entire annihilation with it? Is this constant flow of thought and activity to cease for ever in its course, and this light of reason to be for ever blotted out in darkness? Or if not, if this parting spirit is to survive the grave, what is to be its home and its pursuits? And is that same lawless chance which made it its sport here, still to pursue it through another state, and toss it as a bubble upon the ocean of eternity? Alas! poor infidel, thou canst not tell, for the book of nature makes no revelations of an eternal state, nor lights up the grave with the hope of a joyful resurrection?

But this is not "our Rock," blessed be God, for the Christian has no such doubts or despair. Everything in heaven above, and earth beneath, is under the supervision and control of Him, who "doeth all things well;" and however adverse they may appear to human short-sightedness, they are beautifully and harmoniously working together for the Christian's good. The God he worships is present in all worlds to control the events of each; and while the whole system of things moves on exactly in accordance with the dictates of his will, and of his wisdom, his regards are as intensely fixed upon the destiny of the obscurest individual, the unfolding of a flower, or the motion of an atom, as if it was the only object to engross

his infinite mind. In the government of the Christian's God, there is no such thing as chance. As nothing is too grand, so nothing is too insignificant for his eye, or his providence to reach; and the veriest worm that creeps upon the earth, and the most ardent seraph that burns before his throne, are alike within the range of his vision, within the control of his arm, and within the circle of his regard.

“To Him, no high, no low, no great, no small,
 He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.
 He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall;
 Atoms, or systems, into ruin hurled,
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world.”

In such a faith as this, the mind reposes with confidence. That doubt and uncertainty, in which events and their consequences are wrapped up by the gloomy creed of infidelity, finds no place in the Christian's soul. His heavenly Father rules over all. Winds, and waves, and human hearts, are in his hands, and when his purposes are accomplished by their blind fury, they shall sink to rest at his bidding. And in the triumph of an overcoming faith, may his servants exclaim, “This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide, even unto death.”

II. Let us consider *which is best adapted to exalt the character of man*. That a belief in the Christian's God is best adapted to exalt and improve human cha-

racter, is evident from the fact, that he is a Being with whom man is brought into more immediate contact. The deist does not expect to meet his god, unless it be in the works of nature, or in some of the great revolutions of society, and often in these, he is so wrapped up in clouds and darkness, as to be scarcely visible or tangible.

But the Christian's God meets him everywhere. Not only is all nature animated by his presence, and vocal with his praise; not only does he meet him when the elements are abroad in their fury, and all nature is convulsed; not only does he meet him when the great ocean of the human mind is stirred up to its profoundest depths, and the nations are heaving and tossing like the billows of the sea; but he sees his hand in every movement of nature and in every day's occurrence in human life. Every sense is alive to his presence; every sense gives evidence of his controlling agency.

“He warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze;
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent;
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”

And there is another closer contact of the Deity with man, of which the rejecter of revelation can have no conception and to whose influence he is lost. I refer to his assumption of man's nature in the person of Jesus Christ. To the deist God's attributes are but as a sort of abstraction, which ever elude the grasp of his intel-

lect. But the Christian's God comes out from behind the veil of his abstract perfections, and brings himself directly in contact with our thoughts and feelings.— I had almost said with our very senses, in the person of the man Christ Jesus. And in this manifestation of God in the flesh, the divine glory is so softened that we can gaze upon it without being overpowered by the vision.

The actions, too, of God, we can here view; the attributes of God we can here contemplate; the authoritative declarations of God we can here listen to, through the medium of a nature as our own.

And has all this no elevating influence upon human character? Can he grovel in the dust who feels that he is living and moving and having his being in such a God as this? Shall he want stronger evidence to attest, and stronger appeals to call forth, the active principles of his nature? Can the infidel's god, in that remote and dim abstraction in which he must appear to his worshippers, awaken such sentiments of gratitude, of love, of hope, of confidence, of humility as fill the breast of the Christian believer? Why, surely, if there is a single dormant virtue in the human soul, the breath of Christian faith will kindle the slumbering spark into life, and make it glow and burn with all the ardor of a seraph's. To know God, to serve him, to enjoy him, is to the devout Christian, the great end of human existence. Earthly distinctions vanish before the ineffable brightness of the eternal throne; earthly hopes are swallowed up in

the prospect of that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

In the beautiful and sublime language of another, "He may be unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, but he is deeply read in the oracles of God; his name may not be found in the register of heralds, or amongst the catalogue of earth's heroes and statesmen, but he trusts it is recorded in the book of life. If his steps be not attended by a princely retinue, angels are his ministers, and bright spirits of the upper world, his every-day attendants; his palace is 'a house not made with hands;' his diadem 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away;' and if he has them not in possession, he knows they are in reversion for him, and shall be given to him in that day when 'God makes up his jewels.' On the rich, on the eloquent, on nobles, and priests, he may look down with contempt. He is rich in a more precious treasure, eloquent in a more sublime language, and noble by the right of an earlier creation."

For his sake, and that of the Church of the living God, of which he is a part, empires have risen and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty has proclaimed his will amidst the thunders and tempests of Sinai, in the still small voice, and in the milder beauties and glories of Zion. For him he has revealed, by the harp of the prophets and the pen of the evangelist, a destiny such as Plato in all his wisdom never dreamed, and Solomon in all his glory never equalled.

For his destruction, all hell is in motion ; for his deliverance, all heaven is on the alert. “Michael and his angels warring against the dragon and his angels.” The great “Captain of his salvation” is the eternal Son of the Highest ; the price of his ransom, the blood-sweat in the garden, and the untold agony upon the tree.

And has infidelity anything in its creed to compare with this? Has it anything to ennoble, to purify, to exalt and refine, and to make man what his Creator destined him to be—the image of his own sublime nature—the transcript of his own glorious perfections? Have the writings of the great masters of deism ever produced such effects upon those who have received their sentiments or followed in their wake? Let our enemies themselves be our judges.

The “Christian is the highest style of man ;” for true Christianity is the source of all genuine politeness, and of all true liberality ; and while it fits for the duties, it also beautifies and adorns every relation in life. It makes the upright ruler, the good citizen, the faithful husband, the affectionate wife, the careful tender parent, the loving obedient child, and the faithful obedient servant.

And lastly, let us consider *which is most likely to meet the exigencies and wants of man?* Which gives the most security, the most sensible enjoyment, and the most supplies? Nor shall our views and feelings be made the standard of judgment ; ye your-

selves shall be the judges. 1st, We appeal to your experience. Experience is knowledge derived from experiment, in opposition to mere theory or hypothesis, and may just as safely be applied to morals as to physics. Experience is the best standard to which we can appeal, and nothing can better test the character and standing of the principles which we avow. And what, unbeliever, is your experience in regard to the rock on which you depend? What changes has it wrought upon you? Has it eradicated a single habit of sin? Has it overpowered one single one of these natural impulses to evil, which hurry us headlong downward, and debase, and debauch, and destroy the soul? Has it conquered any depraved appetite? Has it implanted a single principle, whose tendency is to elevate and purify, and to fit man to discharge every duty, and to adorn every station in which Providence may place him?

Point me, indeed, anywhere, to one character formed under belief of the infidel's god, that exhibits a high degree of moral virtue. You may find some who are inoffensive, and who may be said to be negatively good, as they are free from gross and open vice. But never will you find one of lofty, virtuous aspirations, or elevated to a high standard of moral excellence.

Where are the Edwardses, the Howards, and the Wilberforces of the world, the great pioneers of moral reform, and instruments of her regeneration? Their names illumine not the records of deism. You find

them the worshippers of the God of the Bible,—the followers of Him who embraced a wide world in the arms of his benevolence.

2d. We appeal to your enjoyments. Happiness is the goal for which all are aiming, and the truth or falsity of any scheme of religion may be measured and determined by its ability to contribute to this grand desideratum of human existence. What present enjoyment has your system imparted? What hope of future bliss has it enkindled in the soul?

What support does it afford you in the trials incident to this mortal state? Can it buoy you above the waves of affliction? Can it dissipate the shadows of the dark valley of death? Can it compensate your loss of friends, or cheer your hours of bereavement with the prospect of a blissful reunion in a world where the ties of friendship shall never be severed? Does your creed satisfy the craving of your immortal spirit after substantial good? Does it point with any degree of certainty to a home “where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest?” “I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.”

That prince of infidels, Voltaire, said, in writing to a confidential friend and admirer, “I hate life, and I dread death.” And this was said by a man who had a renown for literary and dramatic talent, unequalled by any contemporary. This was said by him on whose brow but a short time before, had been placed the “laureate crown,” amidst the accla-

mations of rejoicing thousands. This was said by him whose society was courted by the proudest monarch of the age; and who, the admired of all admirers, enlivened the gay assemblies of Paris and Berlin with flashes of wit, and strokes of repartee, as brilliant, as they were ingenious and novel.

And no doubt the blinded world, who worshipped him as the god of her idolatry, thought him a happy man; and surely here was sufficient material for self-gratulation and enjoyment. But the world knew not the secret heart of Voltaire. The gay countenance of the witty philosopher was often a sad index to the real feelings of his soul. Courted and flattered by small and great, and surrounded by everything that could give to life a relish, the expectant of a literary immortality that should outlive the marble and the brass, that man hated life and dreaded death. With all the world could give him, it could not give him that which most of all he needed,—peace of mind. With all that had been lavished upon him, his soul was still empty and unsatisfied. What a striking comment upon infidelity! What a verdict upon his own principles, by one who, in his efforts to subvert the kingdom of Jesus, made his motto “Crush the wretch.” Did he do it? Did he not rather crush himself? “Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

Be ye the judges if the case of Voltaire in his infidelity be peculiar. Is it not as universal as the ex-

istence of a conscience unappeased, and a heart unwashed from sin?

Lastly, we appeal to the bed of sickness, and to the solemnities of death. If ever men are honest, it is on a dying bed. If ever their real sentiments are expressed, it is when they are on the borders of that unknown land from which no traveller ever returns. Where, then, is the god of the infidel? Where, then, is the power of his creed to sustain in that most fearful and trying of all human events? Can he go down into "the valley of the shadow of death," and "fear no evil?" Can he commit himself to the cold waves, that divide this world of flesh and blood from the spirit land, with the faintest hope that his shall be a happy destiny? Go ask the masters of infidelity themselves, the Humes, the Voltaires, the Paines. Do you see them gathering their philosophy about them and lying down to die in calmness and composure, as examples to their followers? Nay, instead of this, you see them sneaking out of life as cowards and as felons, mingling supplications with curses, to that Saviour whom they had in vain attempted to crush, and then rushing—they know not where. Oh if this be the end of the unbeliever, how dreadful beyond description! Yet such are the legitimate results of infidelity.

Turn with me from these scenes of horror, to "the chamber where the good man meets his fate." Witness the triumph of faith over sense, the hopes that bud and blossom on the very margin of the grave.

For the believer, "to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "This," said an eminent saint, in the hour of dissolution, "is not dying, this is falling asleep in Jesus;" and calmly and serenely, as if he was but wrapping his mantle about him, and lying down to pleasant dreams, he passed to his Saviour's bosom.

When the devoted Philip Jenks was struggling in the last pains of death, one said to him, "How hard it is to die." He replied, "Oh, no, no; easy dying, blessed dying, glorious dying. I have experienced more happiness in dying two hours this day, than in my whole life. It is worth a whole life to have such an end as this. I have long desired that I might glorify God in my death, but oh, I never thought that such a poor worm as I could come to such a glorious death."

Old Simeon, clasping the infant Saviour in his arms, could say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." And the honored Apostle of the Gentiles, as the hour of his departure approaches, longs to be dismissed from the cumbrous clay, and kindling into rapture at the prospect of dissolution, exclaims, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." Why these shouts of triumph from the very swellings of Jordan? Why comes this song of

salvation floating its sweet music across the waves of death, if Jesus be not the only Saviour of the world, and the promises of the gospel the only hope of the dying sons of men? "Even our enemies themselves being judges," have we not indubitable evidence that—

"Jesus can make a dying bed,
 Feel soft as downy pillows are;
 While on his breast we lean our head,
 And breathe our life out sweetly there?"

And now, in conclusion, we leave you to judge and decide in this matter. It is a question of the utmost importance, and one upon which is suspended your everlasting destiny. Who of you, then, will dare trust the infidel's god as a refuge,—as a Saviour for pardon and peace? Who will dare trust him in the hour of extremity; and on the bed of death, or be willing to throw his deathless spirit on his protection for eternity? Who will dare do this, when thousands, who have already done it, have died reproaching themselves for their wretched infatuation? If any of you who adopt the infidel's creed are right and we are wrong, still our prospect for eternity is as good as yours. But oh! if the reverse be true, if we are right and you are wrong, you are running a fearful hazard if you reject the only hope of the sinner, and grieve away by wilful unbelief that blessed Spirit, that would woo and win you, as trophies of mercy, to the feet of Jesus. "Oh! that you were

wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end.”

Lastly, let the Christian be satisfied with his choice. If infidels will not be convinced, Christians should be confirmed. A faithful and unchanging God is their strong refuge. This “Rock” has supported the Church in every age, amidst violent opposition and arduous labor, and it shall never cease toward her its protection and aid, so that, according to the promise, “the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.”

And if any of you, my dying hearers, would have the Christian’s God to be your portion, you must devote your hearts and lives to his service; you must love him supremely, trust him implicitly, and obey him fully. Then, I repeat it, you may be fearless in adversity, fearless in death, and fearless amid the funeral fires of the world.

Happy the man whose hopes rely
 On Israel’s God; He made the sky,
 And earth, and seas, with all their train;
 His truth for ever stands secure;
 He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor,
 And none shall find His promise vain.

The Lord hath eyes to give the blind;
 The Lord supports the sinking mind;
 He sends the laboring conscience peace;
 He helps the stranger in distress,
 The widow and the fatherless,
 And grants the prisoner sweet release.

He loves his saints, He knows them well,
 But turns the wicked down to hell ;
 Thy God, O Sion, ever reigns ;
 Let every tongue, let every age,
 In this exalted work engage ;
 Praise Him in everlasting strains.

I'll praise Him while he lends me breath ;
 And when my voice is lost in death,
 Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
 While life and thought and being last,
 Or immortality endures.

SERMON III.

HALTING BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS.

“And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord *be* God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”—1 KINGS, xviii. 21.

ISRAEL, as the Lord informs us by his prophet Jeremiah, chap. 2 : 13, “had committed two evils; they had forsaken him, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that could hold no water.” From the day in which they had revolted from the son of Solomon, and listened to the seducing words of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, they had almost entirely cast off their allegiance to

the God of their fathers, and given themselves up to the debasing idolatries of the heathen around them.

Their princes, without a single exception, had led the way in this wicked and daring apostacy. They endeavored to break down the separating wall by which the Almighty had hedged them up from the nations around them, and they made the altars of Israel to smoke with sacrifices, and her people to bow down in worship to "them that were no gods."

This apostacy and idolatry were not without their punishment. They provoked the jealousy and indignation of Him who has said, "My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." He delivered this people up, in consequence, into the hands of their enemies. He permitted those very nations whose idolatries they had imitated, and whose abominations they had adopted, to trample upon them. Yea, his curse rested upon the work of their hands. For three years and a half he withheld from them the rains of heaven, and made the heavens above them as brass, and the earth under them as iron, even to cut off from the land "the whole stay of bread and the whole stay of water."

Gaunt famine stalked through the land. The king on his throne and the beggar upon the dung-hill, were alike destitute of the necessaries of life, and pined away under its withering touch. Yet the Lord will have his witness in the most degenerate times, and as he does not immediately cut off his professing people for their sins, he employs various means to

convince them of those sins of which they are guilty, and to bring them to repentance of them.

Having afflicted Israel for more than three years with famine, he now sends his servant Elijah, whom he had hitherto kept concealed from the fury of the idolatrous Ahab, fearlessly to disclose to the king the cause of the divine judgment. As he suddenly appears before him, Ahab immediately charges him with being a troubler in Israel, because, as the faithful minister of God, he had not ceased to warn the nation of the consequences of their idolatry, and to labor to bring them back to the worship of the Most High. The prophet denies the charge, and, fearless of the tyrant's rage, denounces him as being the real troubler of Israel. "And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Balaam. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the grove four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table."

The boldness with which the prophet made the charge was intimidating to the wicked king. He had still some secret dread of the prophet's power, and of the authority of Him under whom he acted, and finding that the prophet would not be forced into his measures, and willing, perhaps, to be on terms with him, in order to procure the removal of the

famine, he is induced to consent to the command which he made.

To the altars, then, which they had erected on Mount Carmel, where they offered up their unholy sacrifices, the eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the groves are commanded to appear, and with them all Israel. And here, in the places of their power, and before their false gods, Elijah desires to confront them in the presence of the people, to bring the matter to a fair decision, and to see by whose power the drought had been sent, and at whose will it could be removed. At the time and place appointed they all assembled, and, before proceeding to the experiment that was to test the true divinity of the place, he puts to the vacillating and unstable Israelites the query of the text: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." As conviction or interest prompted, they had been yielding homage to Jehovah and to Baal. Now, either the one or the other of these was false, and such indecision on their part was not only irrational but highly culpable, and it was all-important that an election of one or the other should be made. "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

And this spirit of indecision between the service of God and the idolatries of the world, so severely reproved by the prophet, was not peculiar to the ancient Israelite. It still has its place in the hearts of multitudes who, whilst they acknowledge the

claims of God upon them, are still found in the ranks of his enemies.

There can be nothing more dangerous than this vacillating, indecisive spirit. It generally results in a procrastination of the great things of religion, until "the axe is laid unto the root of the tree." God has appointed in his church various means of grace, and has essentially connected our salvation with their appropriate use, and to neglect or slight them must be ruinous to the soul. Nay, the church visible is "the pillar and ground of the truth," and a connexion with that church, and a profession of faith in the name of Him who founded it, is one of the most prominent tests of discipleship, and the point at which men are so often apt to "halt between two opinions."

It is *to the necessity of this outward profession, and to the importance of a prompt and right decision in regard to it*, that I now desire to call your attention. And if any of you are halting between two opinions upon it, or are undecided whether to come out on the Lord's side or not, I hope that the motives and arguments presented may bring you at once to that decision, which shall bring with it no regrets on a dying bed, or at a judgment bar. You will all admit that a happy destiny for eternity is an object of the greatest importance, and that existence boasts no blessings, the universe no charms, so long as the question of our eternal destination is undetermined. And whilst we note these concessions of the value of Christian hope, and the importance of Christian pro-

fession and practice, some of you are standing back from the fountain of Israel, and like Naaman of old, refusing to hear the voice of God's great prophet.

Everywhere do the scriptures represent man to be in a helpless and perishing condition. And I need not tell you that the only possibility of deliverance for any sinner under heaven, flows from the interposition of Jesus Christ. Then surely if the Messiah has appointed means for salvation, they who refuse to use them must lose the benefit of his interposition and perish in their sins. We mean to say that out of the Church of Christ there is no ordinary possibility of salvation, and in doing so we mean to attach no meritorious power, no episcopal grace, to ordinances, nor to give them any efficacy apart from "the blessing of Christ and the working of his spirit in them that by faith receive them." Nor do we mean to assume for the Church and its officers any spiritual authority beyond what the Bible grants them. But as Christ has made our connexion with that Church, and our reception of the ordinances administered in it, a test of Christianity and a badge of discipleship, without these we can neither expect to grow in grace inwardly, nor to be considered outwardly as sincere followers of Christ.

I know the sentiment may appear harsh to some who desire salvation on their own terms. And I may be asked, if there is no possible salvation out of the Church's pale, what shall the heathen do? What must become of the moral and the upright, who,

though not professors of religion, are often superior in character to those that are? Or why attach so much importance to mere outward forms, when all admit that true piety consists not in a mere profession of religion or reception of ordinances, but in a right state of heart towards God and man?

Questions such as these, though they may arise in an inquiring mind, are irrelevant to the point at issue, and need but a word to answer them. It is not with the heathen that we have to do to-day; doubtless they that are without law shall be judged without law. Leave them where the Bible leaves them, in the hand of Jesus Christ. We need not fear but that He whose love for our race, both the manger and the cross have witnessed, will be just in every judgment he passes upon his creatures, whether it be of acquittal or condemnation.

Our business is not with the heathen to whom the glad tidings of salvation have never come, but to you, gospel hearers; to you, ye children of the Church, whose infant lips were first taught to lisp the name of Jesus, and who have grown up in his knowledge, and the question is whether you in possession of these privileges can hope for salvation if you refuse to profess that Saviour before the world?

Nor will the fact that there are unworthy professors in the Church, obviate the difficulty or make the subject one of no importance. There have been hypocrites in the Church, and there will be to the end of time. There was a Judas in the family of the

Saviour, and all the safeguards which the officers of God's house, can throw around it will not keep out some who should never have been within its pale. But the question before us is not whether the false, hypocritical professor in the Church will be saved,—we know he will not,—but whether those who stand without, and refuse to make a sincere and godly profession can be saved whilst remaining in that state? And shall the hypocrisy of others excuse our negligence?

Nor do we ask for forms and ordinances any undue value; we do not wish to substitute a mere profession for purity of heart; we only desire to connect ends with their appointed and necessary means. God nourishes neither the body nor the soul by miracle. He has instituted the proper food for their nourishment and growth, and he who would live either temporally or spiritually, must use it as he needs it. You yourselves shall be the judges in the case. You certainly admit that it is presumptuous to hope for salvation in any other than in God's own appointed way. And surely we shall not be considered illiberal if we reiterate the same sentiment. It will be no unreasonable statement, to say that without the precincts of God's visible Church, there can be no ordinary possibility of salvation, we can clearly show you that the Church is itself the appointed means of grace and salvation.

1st. The question is one more of fact than of argument. It was typified in the dispensation of

Moses, which made an external connexion with God's Israel indispensable to the enjoyment of those blessings and privileges connected with his worship. It is clearly revealed in the present economy, and his command and example and exhortation all enforce it. The last commandment given by the Saviour to his apostles, as he sent them forth in his name, includes within it this connexion with the Church. They were to make disciples of all nations by baptism and by faith. So soon as any professed their faith in Christ, they were to collect these together and to organize them into churches, by administering that initiatory right which he appointed. Accordingly you find the apostles, in that first proof of their ministry which they made on the day of Pentecost, exhorting the weeping and repenting multitude who had been smitten by the Holy Spirit to be baptized, every one of them, for the remission of sins; in other words, to make public profession of their faith and repentance by receiving this ordinance of God's house.

And this was the uniform language of these early inspired teachers of Christianity, whether they proclaimed the truth to Jew or Gentile. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach;—that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with

the heart man believeth unto righteousness ; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

“Search the scriptures” for yourselves, my friends. Compare the command first given, and the manner in which the apostles everywhere executed it. Study carefully the various epistles addressed by them to the churches, and we are sadly mistaken if you will find anywhere a single intimation that Jesus Christ will confer salvation upon those who refuse to connect themselves with his visible Church.

Wherever you read of mercy sought or shown, the subjects of it are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.” But perhaps some may be ready to say, that command refers to baptism, and have we not been baptized? This may be true, and undoubtedly is, in regard to a great number of you. Your believing parents may have dedicated you to God in this ordinance, and thus recognised you as in the visible church.

But do you not know, you who have come to years of discretion, that, without faith in Him whose name was named upon you, you practically renounce your baptism? Do you not know that unless you make a public profession by communicating with his people in that other ordinance he hath appointed, you become apostates from his church, and thus not only cut yourselves off from every privilege connected with your baptism, but expose yourselves to the doom of the hypocrite and the unbeliever?

Recollect, you that are of age to act, and have not approved and ratified by your own act, that of your parents, that you really abjure it. You renounce the Trinity in whose name you were baptized; your baptism becomes as no baptism; you are no longer regarded in covenant relation to God, but are become "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

2d. I remark that the nature of the gospel economy, and the terms in which it is everywhere described, point to the Church of God as the great means of salvation. You may recognise it everywhere in those strong and expressive figures, by which the Saviour and his apostles delineate the character and relations of those whose faith has laid hold of his atoning merit. He tells us that he came to establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace, and in every willing subject of that kingdom, you recognise a member of the Church of God. That kingdom is made up of individuals, united in a corporate capacity, bound by common laws, and blessed with common rights. And where will you find that kingdom, out of the visible church?

What is that body of which every believer is a living member, which is united to a living head, and partakes of its vital influence, but the church which Jesus bought with his blood? What is that mighty temple erecting in the world, of which saints are lively stones, and Jesus Christ is the chief corner-

stone, but that church which is "the pillar and ground of the truth?" What is that blessed household of which Jesus is the elder brother, and God the great and everlasting Father, but the church which has been redeemed by the blood of the Son of God? Who are those living branches that are connected with the living vine, and derive their growth and nourishment from its rich and all-pervading juices, but the members of that church which Christ established, and who, blessed with the ordinances and means of grace that he has appointed, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Thus, in almost every figure by which the duties or the blessings of believers are represented, are they considered, not as individuals, but in that social organization which gives them common rights with one another, and common privileges with their head and Saviour. It is true that many of those figures refer not so much to the visible as to the invisible and spiritual church of God, yet the one is ordinarily the gateway to the other. The visible church is the storehouse from which the true believer receives his food, its ordinances are the armory from which he draws his well-tempered weapons of defence.

And though God, under peculiar covenants, may have received into his invisible church, and saved some who were never outwardly connected with his people on earth, yet this is not the rule but the exception. Nor do we set bounds to his power and grace when we confine the means of salvation within

the limits he has ordained. He may nourish the souls of his servants as he did the body of Elijah by miracle, when his providence has placed them beyond the reach of the ordinary supply ; but, generally, he effects not by supernatural agency that which can be accomplished by secondary causes and instrumentalities. It is in his house that you are to find that provision which suits your starving souls. It is in his house that he fills his poor with bread, and they who remain without must necessarily, unless supplied by miracle, perish with hunger.

3d. I remark that in the promises of the world's salvation, those mighty multitudes that are to be detached from Satan's ranks, are all to swell the triumphs of the Church. Look at the promises and predictions of a race regenerated and redeemed, as you meet them on almost every page of the blessed Bible. Is not that joyous event, when all the nations shall renounce their idols, and the princes and the kings of the earth shall bring their honors and their crowns, and lay them at the feet of Jesus, predicted in connexion with a glorious and universal church? Shall not they, who, under the sweetly constraining influence of grace, leave the temples of idols and the tables of devils to glory in the cross, go to the enlargement of this one church, and be embraced in this one kingdom of God's Messiah?

To whom shall the nations come bending with their tribute but to the Zion of God? To whose light shall the Gentiles come, and to the brightness

of whose rising shall the great kings of the nations gather? To whom is that promise made, Thou shalt bring thy sons from afar, and thy daughters from the ends of the earth? To whom shall the gold and incense of India be brought, or the flocks of Kedar and the rams of Nebaioth minister, but to that church whose gates are continually open,—that afflicted and tempest-tossed church, whose walls are salvation and whose gates praise?

Is not that church whose privileges and blessings were ratified to Abraham and to his seed by circumcision, the only true church of God on earth? Into that church professing Gentiles in every age have been admitted, and to it is the poor, wandering, proscribed Jew, who has been cast off for unbelief, again to be restored, and to be brought in with “the fulness of the Gentiles.” How shall the aliens and the outcasts from the commonwealth of Israel,—those who have thrown themselves out upon God’s uncovenanted mercies, be restored, if not by a believing reception of those external seals, which will again place the wanderers within the fold, and make them sharers in all the rights and immunities which belong to God’s believing Israel?

Thus it has ever been in every work of grace carried on in the world. The spirit was poured out upon the day of Pentecost, that the Lord might add to “the Church daily such as should be saved.” And if salvation was commonly administered in any other way, it would falsify the predictions of Scripture, and

make all the declared purposes and plans of God of none effect.

I have said it was a question of fact rather than of argument. And, surely, if we have the least anxiety to prepare our souls for a happy destination, such an array of facts as these, meeting us on every page of the Bible, and growing into clearer light with every new development of the Church's history, should lead to a prompt and right decision. "If the Lord be God, follow him." If salvation, and that soul's salvation whose price outweighs all worlds, is only to be secured by an open union and fellowship with God's believing people, why, in the name of all that is solemn, serious in time and eternity, should we hesitate for a single moment? Difficulties may lie in your way, but these difficulties will grow in magnitude as you procrastinate. The spirit that is now balancing between heaven and hell, weighed down by carnal lusts and worldly pleasures, will eventually settle down on that side, where, if Messiah's mercy reach you, it will be a "miracle of grace."

I shall not stop to inquire the causes of this indecision on your part. Their name is "legion." Satan and the sinful heart have a thousand artifices by which they deceive even awakened sinners, and lead them to waste out life and hope in ineffective vacillation. Yet whatever be the immediate cause, whether educational influences or the fears of conscience, attachment to the world or dread of its sneers, the

indecision, if persevered in, must eventually prove fatal.

We deceive ourselves if we imagine that such indecision places us upon neutral ground, from which we may make our election of Christ or the world. Strictly speaking, there can be no neutrality in religion, no time in which we are not identified either with the kingdom of Christ or with the kingdom of Satan, and we give you the highest authority for the truth of what we say, when we quote the language of God's great prophet: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

And if this be not sufficient to bring the question to an issue, I may add other motives and arguments to those already adduced. Salvation has been connected with the Church for good and various reasons, and time would fail me to present them all before you. This arrangement, however, is founded on the social principles of our nature. God never intended man to be alone. He implanted that social feeling in our heart which instinctively draws us together into life's varied relations, and makes our own individual life a mere link in the common life of the world, and by all the various operations of this social law, we are led and moulded, and either injured or benefited. And if God has created us with that relative dependency which makes our union in families, and states, and nations, necessary to our temporal well-being and essential to the perfection of art, and

the growth and cultivation of the human mind in its present state, he certainly will not command us to violate the instincts of our common nature, when he calls us to consider the relation that we sustain to him, and the duties which grow out of that relation. Must we cease to be human in order to be saved, or must we lose all those social feelings which link us to all the sweet charities of life? No, my friends, God acts not thus inconsistently with himself, nor would he make us act inconsistently with our nature.

And hence it is only in his Church that you find the social principle perfected. It is the last grand development of that system of mutual relations and dependencies which began in Eden, when God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone;" and when he formed from his side and near his heart one who was to bear with him his sorrows, and share with him his joys.

And hence as the life and comfort of man here is bound up with that of the world, so is the life, the profession of the Christian bound up by an indissoluble bond with the Church of God. No regulation affords such means for man to influence man in the great things of religion, as in binding them together in one great association, as in giving them a common platform to stand upon, a common cause to defend, a common hope to cheer, and a common destiny to identify.

Whilst the Bible regards man as an individual, and makes personal salvation a personal concern, it

is not as an isolated being shut out from all the world by insuperable barriers, but as one possessed of a social nature, and bound by the instincts and feelings of a common humanity to the race of which he is a member. On this social law is our salvation predicated, and in every step that leads to it, are we either retarded or advanced by the relative position which we sustain to others.

For this law God has ever had a strict regard. Search the scriptures, and you will find that in every covenant made with man, from that of Eden to that of Calvary, God had respect to man's social relations, and treated him as but a part of one whole system, with whose condition he was identified. And if he has always dispensed blessings in accordance with that law, think you that he will permit you to disregard it? Or that he will suspend its operation, in order to elevate you to the heaven of his glory? You know how stable are all the laws which govern nature, and with what unerring certainty you can predict at dark the returning dawn, or at seedtime the appointed weeks of harvest.

So fixed, so inviolable, are those laws, that a single invasion of them is regarded as a miracle, and becomes a wonder of nature; so fixed, so inviolable, that you can scarcely believe that when Moses stretched his rod across the waters of the sea, they divided and stood on either hand, though it was to secure deliverance for all God's Israel; so fixed, so inviolable, that when you read the record of the

Saviour's mighty works, your faith almost staggers, though they were done to attest his gracious mission to the world. And yet you, who think it strange that one law should be suspended, though to effect the deliverance of myriads of God's chosen people, will plead for the suspension of a law with whose operation is interwoven the destinies of a world; and you will plead for it, not for the advantage of those who yield implicit obedience to God's authority, but for the advantage of those who desire its destruction, simply because they will not obey him and seek salvation in his own appointed way. This were indeed a miracle greater than that which accomplished Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

Sooner would I believe yon sun would stand still upon the mountain's brow, until the idler, who had wasted his hours in bed, would finish his neglected task, or fulfil the appointed labors of the day. No! let God be true, though all men should be confounded. He has committed every ordinance of salvation to the Church of Jesus Christ, and if you would secure its blessings, you must place yourself under the operation of its fixed and social laws. He has organized his kingdom on a principle that leaves no excuse for those who refuse to enter it, and to obey its ordinances. And he bids you quit for ever the ranks of the rebellious, to range yourselves under the government of God, and to do it openly. If you refuse, you still stand marshalled under the banner of his enemy; and, led and moulded by the same social law,

are urging on yourselves to the door prepared for Satan and his angels.

It is clear, then, that the kingdom and the Church of God are coextensive. The willing subjects of the one, must be the professed members of the other. And it is clear that if he is consistent, he can never acknowledge as subjects of the one, any who refuse obedience to that law which binds them to confess with the mouth, the Lord Jesus, as well as to believe on him with the heart.

These are the terms upon which he offers you salvation, and you cannot quarrel with me if, as his ambassador, I say you trifle with your peace when you reject them. He will not abrogate the laws of social nature, or check the moral movements of the world from their right course, to save even you. Salvation is of the Church, and God invites you to the fellowship of that Church, and he pledges his own glory, that if you come to him sincerely in the way he bids you, and enter upon that course of discipline which he has ordained, you shall be embraced in the destinies of that Church, and be a sharer in the final triumph of its great King and Saviour. If you do not like the terms, go try your own experiments; seek some other way of salvation, and let Messiah's justice be vindicated in that day, when, upon his judgment throne, he shall verify that solemn declaration which he made on earth, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

And now, why "halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him." If salvation is predicated of the Church, why hesitate a moment to enter its sacred pale? "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Think of "the glory which shall be revealed in you," if you acquiesce in Messiah's plan of salvation; and think, too, of that dreadful alternative that awaits you if you refuse.

I trust that with most of you, I stand high above the imputation of a mere proselyting spirit, in thus urging upon you a question of so much importance. For me, it is enough, whatever other results may follow, if you will but listen to the voice of wisdom, and secure the end in view. It is the sum of my ambition to see you all the sincere and faithful followers of Jesus Christ, and safely lodged within the bosom of that ark which has already rode out the fierce tempests of the past, and which shall move along most gallantly, until it has accomplished its destiny, and landed its precious freight at the portals of high heaven. Let me but see and know this, and I shall be content. Let me but see that salvation has blessed the people of my charge,—that those, over whom God hath placed me, are found denying themselves, and taking up their crosses daily, and following Christ; like Zacharias and Elizabeth of old, "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless," with a "good hope through grace" of a blissful immortality, and "my heart shall rejoice, even mine;" for then shall God be glorified,

and we shall for ever share together "the things" which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man;" but "which God hath prepared for them that love him."

If any of you, however, will not decide to follow the Lord,—will refuse to confess Christ before the world, and go down to the grave without an interest in his blood, your condition will be a lamentable one indeed. You must be filled with utter dismay amid the events which are coming upon the universe, and which are connected with your final destiny; events, the greatness of which nothing finite can measure, and such as will cause all that is momentous in the annals of the world to sink into insignificance. When the graves open, and the sea gives up its dead, that voice that is now wooing you in accents of mercy will call you from the grave. And willing or unwilling, you must stand in the presence of your Judge,—a Judge before whom the pillars of heaven tremble, a Judge, once long-suffering and compassionate, but now come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel.

Do you hope, then, to come forth erect and courageous to brave the terrors of this Judge? And where will you look for protection, when the stars are falling, when the heavens are rolling together, and when the world is in flames? When holy men and angels abandon you, and when the great Mediator leaves you to your fate? Are you willing to be speechless with guilt? To be stigmatized with infamy? To endure

the frowns of God's wrath, and the insults of accursed spirits? And are you willing that the violated laws of Jehovah shall be fully executed upon you? Surely not. Oh, then I warn you "to flee from the wrath to come." I beseech you to halt no longer "between two opinions." I urge you to fly without delay, to the shelter of the Saviour's blood. Remember that you have been called this day to choose between life and death; Christ and the world; heaven and hell; and if you refuse the good, and choose the evil, be assured that death will be to you the king of terrors; that the resurrection will be no privilege to you; that the judgment day will exalt you to no honor; and that immortality will be your bitterest curse. But O, rather would I save, not only my own soul, but the souls of all that hear me.

Lord, I am thine, entirely thine,
 Purchased and saved by blood divine;
 With full consent, thine would I be,
 And own thy sovereign right in me.

Grant one poor sinner more a place
 Among the children of thy grace;
 A wretched sinner, lost to God,
 But ransomed by Immanuel's blood.

Thine would I live, thine would I die;
 Be thine through all eternity:
 The vow is past beyond repeal;
 Now will I set the solemn seal.

Here at that cross where flows the blood
 That bought my guilty soul for God,
 Thee, my new Master, now I call,
 And consecrate to thee my all.

Do thou assist a feeble worm
 The great engagement to perform ;
 Thy grace can full assistance lend,
 And on that grace I dare depend.

SERMON IV.

DELAYS ARE DANGEROUS.

“To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.”—
 PSALM xciv. 7.

THERE is nothing more common, nor yet more dangerous, than neglect of the soul. Men are indifferent, where they should be all attention; they procrastinate, when their immediate and most vigilant activity is required. Momentous as are the interests of their immortal being, they postpone them until they have satisfied their desires after earthly objects.

Like the Israelites, of whom mention is made in the battle of Aphek, they are busy here and there, and the charge committed to their care is nothing thought of; or if conscience obtrude its existence upon them, they silence its clamors, and console them-

selves that hereafter when the business and cares of life cease to press upon them, they will consult their eternal welfare, and secure their souls' salvation. Alas! how many are trusting to such refuges of lies, crying, "To-morrow, to-morrow, will be time enough;" until they are suppressed by the march of death, and the day of retribution, with all its dreaded terrors, is upon them unawares.

So thought Felix, the Roman governor, when the apostle reasoned with him "of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." He trembled, and answered, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee;" when I have drunk of the cup of guilty pleasure until satiety has come; when all the difficulties in my way towards higher power and honor are removed, I will send for thee, and hear thee again of this matter. And this quieted his conscience; he bade the messenger of heaven depart, but he never again returned to point the luxurious lover of the world to the Lamb of God. Drowned in guilty pleasure, the unhappy victim of procrastination forgot the convictions of the past. He forgot, in injustice, that righteousness of which Paul reasoned; he forgot, as he feasted to the full in the vapid and licentious pleasures of a sordid world, that temperance so essential to health and happiness; he forgot, in the round of courtly amusement, and in iniquitous decisions, as a civil officer, that righteous bar before which he himself was soon to appear. Evil propensities had grown by continuance; the

disease had gained strength by neglect; the Delilah he had cherished, had shorn him of all his strength.

And as Felix fell, so fall thousands of our race. Blinded by the god of this world, who reigns in the minds and hearts of those that believe not, they cannot, because they will not stop to consider the fallacy of such reasoning and the fatality of such hopes. The world is their idol, and after that they will go. But whilst they grasp at the shadows that elude them, and dream on, day after day, of stopping to-morrow, the ever-rolling stream upon which they have embarked, is gliding onwards with them, and losing itself in a shoreless ocean.

Men, in their sins, judge of the future by the past. They have gone thus far in the path of sinful pleasure, and escaped. They eat, drink, and are merry, and fancy that "to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant;" and "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Whilst they promise themselves that at some future day—at some indefinite period—that may come, they know not when, they will repent of all this accumulated guilt; and exercise a faith in Christ that shall remove its penalty. This soothes their troubled conscience; this gives them a new impulse on the road to ruin, often unchecked until their feet have stumbled upon the dark mountains, and the

shadows of eternal night have gathered upon their souls.

They would shudder at a decided rejection of the Saviour; they would shudder to come forth with the impious Voltaire, crying, "Crush the wretch," and resolve to stand or fall with the enemies of Christ. But surely they think, that whilst they acknowledge the truth of the gospel—the claims which God has upon them,—and promise to satisfy them hereafter, they can, for the present, enjoy the world without fear of molestation. Surely, God is not so severe as to demand an immediate surrender and self-denial, and not allow them to indulge in the pleasures of the hour.

All have their excuses. The young, in the hope of earthly happiness. The world is fresh before them, and they anticipate delight in every step that they take. And whilst they are not aware that it is throwing its toils around them, and entangling their feet in the net, they are promising themselves to make religion their study when the vivacity and gaiety of youth shall have given place to the sobriety of manhood, or the gravity of age.

Those in middle life have their excuses also. They are pulling down their barns and building greater; they are adding house to house, and field to field; their own and their families' comfort require their present attention; and, hereafter, when all these various temporal interests are secured, and the decline of life is upon them, they will consider their destiny, and make pre-

paration for their final departure. And even old age, though trembling upon "the brink," and soon "to launch away," is calculating upon *to-morrow*, and waiting for "a more convenient season."

But to all such, whatever be their age or circumstances, the admonition of my text comes home. Unto you, O men, it calls; and its voice is unto the sons of men. Boast not yourselves of *to-morrow*. Deceive not yourselves with those delusive prospects, which, like the mirage of the desert, loom up before you with a thousand beauties, but which disappear as you approach. But "to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness."

The provocations and temptations to which the Psalmist here refers, are those murmurings and rebellions of Israel in the wilderness, that provoked God to swear in his wrath, that not one of all that generation, excepting Caleb and Joshua, should enter the promised land.

The wilderness is, however, a type of our world, and Canaan a type of heaven. And they who, under the gospel, refuse to listen to the voice of God, are guilty of a greater provocation, and are, therefore, exposing themselves to the fearful maledictions of that wrath which shuts out all admission to the rest of heaven. "These things," says an apostle, "happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come." They happened to the intent that we

should “fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” To-day, then, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.

The voice of God, as used in his word, may signify the communications that he is pleased to make concerning himself, and the duties that he requires of us. Hence we speak of the voice of God in creation, in providence, by his Spirit, and by his word. It is, especially, to the latter of these that the text, as quoted by the apostle to the Hebrews, refers. It is the voice of God in that gospel of his grace, which he has revealed for the redemption of lost and ruined man. Of similar import is the language of the Saviour to the church of Laodicea, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” It is that glorious discovery of justice and mercy harmonizing in the salvation of souls, which, in time past, was spoken unto the fathers by the prophets, but which hath, in these last days, been spoken unto us by God’s own Son in our nature, and who, by the authority vested in him as king and head of the Church, has commissioned his servants to proclaim it unto the ends of the earth.

To you, therefore, has this gospel come, whilst millions are destitute of it; to you does it promise life and salvation; and you does it command, upon the peril of your souls, to obey. Even now—to-day in this accepted time—does it command your atten-

tion, "lest your hearts be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and your day of grace for ever close."

It admits of no procrastination, and to every one who is saying, "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry," it replies, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." To-day is the only appropriate season for its reception; the future is wrapped in gloom. We are as men walking in the dark, whose next step may be in a snare or over a precipice.

Literally speaking, a day is that period of time in which the earth revolves upon its axis; but it is used, indefinitely, to signify any period of time allotted to a certain work, and beyond which it cannot be performed. The Saviour had a work to perform in his day, and he exclaimed, "How am I straitened until it be accomplished?" The word is also used to signify that period in which God waits to be gracious; in which he commands us to repent and believe the gospel, and beyond which his mercies are clean gone for ever. Generally speaking, that period is life; and as we have no security for its continuance a single day, or even a single hour, there is a peculiar propriety in the expression, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Now, as in the vision of the patriarch, do we behold the heavens open; now is there a constant communication kept up between heaven and your souls, in the means of grace, by the convictions of conscience,

and by the strivings of the Spirit. But soon this door will be closed, this communication broken off. The Lamb will then become a lion, and he that is filthy will be filthy still. When once that door is closed, all efforts to enter heaven will be of no avail. We may stand without and knock, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," but he shall answer, "I know you not; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Consider, then, the invaluable possession of the day of grace. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Now God waits to be gracious, and in the offers of mercy which you now enjoy in his house, you have abundant evidence of the fact. And how know we that we shall have such another opportunity to secure our souls' salvation? To us are the fleeting hours of this Sabbath rapidly revolving, and what security have we that another Sabbath shall find us in the possession of the privileges we now enjoy? What security that we shall again hear the offers of divine mercy which we now reject? Who can look forward with a seer's vision, and promise himself even another week's indulgence in sin?

Oh! if the mighty multitude in whose heart the pulse of life beats warm to-day, and who, before another Sabbath's dawn, are to enter the shadows of that dark vale from whence there is no return, were all to be marshalled in one vast spectral army before us, would it not startle us from our stupor, and awaken in every one of us a sense of our imminent

danger? And is death less inevitable, because our senses are not shocked with scenes such as these? Is the danger less near, because we do not see it? Not a week but six hundred thousand of the human family enter upon their eternal state. And what security have we that we may not be of the number the ensuing week? And even admitting that our life may be prolonged, still the end of every opportunity enjoyed in the house of God is rapidly approaching, and the seats we now occupy will soon be for ever vacated.

The Saviour is pleading with some in our world to-day, for the last time. How know we that such may not be the case with us? His Spirit shall not always strive with man. He will give up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, the soul that, despite all his admonitions and entreaties, continues in impenitence and unbelief, for "he that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Oh, then, to-day, if we will hear his voice, let us not harden our hearts. If there be one conviction in our hearts of our lost and ruined condition, let us cherish it. Let not Satan pluck it out; let not the cares of this world stifle it into indifference, lest God arise and swear in his wrath, that we "shall not enter into his rest."

We know not our danger,—we know not the bearing which the present hour has upon our eternal destiny. There is a line which, once past, there is no return to hope. It is the Rubicon of the soul,

when the die is for ever cast, and the destiny of the spirit sealed by a sentence that knows no reversal. Years may intervene between the time it is pronounced and executed, but the man is a doomed man. He may not feel it, but his very insensibility and recklessness of consequences, his utter disregard for everything sacred and divine, is one of the strongest evidences of his fearful and unhappy state. He has deliberately trampled under foot the blood of the Son of God, and sinned away his day of grace, and for him there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

That point every impenitent sinner is nearing, for every repeated act of transgression must necessarily tend to harden the heart, to weaken every impression of divine things, and to produce in the mind that feeling of reckless, daring impiety, which provokes the divine vengeance, and delivers over the seared and callous transgressor a prey to the adversary, that he may learn, as he wrings out the bitter dregs of his cup of sorrow, not to blaspheme. Woe be upon them to whom it is said, "They are joined to their idols; let them alone." "Oh! that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."

What a subject for serious consideration. The world may have its important interests. God has given us faculties and senses adapted to its use and enjoyment, and has placed all things under our feet,

and its riches and honors are not to be despised when they are honestly obtained, and for a good end. But what are the riches of the world to the riches of grace and glory? What the highest honors it has ever heaped upon its votaries, compared to the honor that cometh from God only? They sink into insignificance, they dwindle, they disappear before those mighty interests that cluster around the judgment throne, and mould, as by the hand of fate, the soul's everlasting destiny.

Oh, how unwise, then, not to secure those imperishable riches and honors, when they are offered upon the authority of God, and offered, too, without money and without price. But to how many are all these things but as idle tales! How many are endeavoring to stifle their convictions of duty by permitting their thoughts, whilst addressed, to wander away from the house of God, and the solemn voice of his word! How many are pre-occupying their minds with their business and their pleasures, lest their fears should be alarmed, and their false peace disturbed!

Such, alas! is the deceitfulness of the human heart. So many are the sources of its own self-deception. But, surely, to reject the Saviour to-day, will not fit us for a reception of his truth hereafter; nor will hardening our hearts against his fear to-day, make them softer to-morrow. The Bible makes no mention of a future day of grace. Its uniform language is in

accordance with the text, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart."

As every season in life has its appropriate duties, each one a means of preparation for the other,—youth for manhood, and manhood for old age,—so is life a season of preparation for eternity, and the duties that are to be performed to-day cannot be performed hereafter. And as life in general is the season of preparation for eternity, so are there peculiar seasons in life when the text comes home with emphatic earnestness. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart."

Youth is one of these seasons the most favorable for seeking the one thing needful, and securing "that good part which shall not be taken away from us." To those of you who are present, yet young, and around whose souls the world has not yet thrown its mantle of indifference, religion presents peculiar inducements to make it your study and chief delight. With you the fountain of feeling is yet fresh and gushing, and the cold selfishness of the world has not seared your sensibilities or hardened your hearts. To you the Saviour calls to-day. To-day gladly would he gather you, ye lambs of the flock, into his fold, and lead you by the green pastures and still waters of eternal life.

The mark of the destroyer is not yet laid so heavily upon you as upon others. Ye are not yet borne down by the crimes of years or the sorrows of age; ye are yet susceptible of religious impressions,

and feel the force of divine truth. Why, then, permit these golden opportunities to pass unimproved, when every fresh refusal will but confirm your habits of sin, and destroy every relish for religious duties?

They that seek Christ early shall find him, but it will be easier for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, than for those to do good that have long been accustomed to do evil. "Remember, then, your Creator in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when you shall say, we have no pleasure in them." Oh! if you wish the memory of other years to be embittered by the sad recollection of privileges slighted, of mercies abused, and of talents buried and perverted, go harden your hearts against the fear of God,—go forget your duties and your accountabilities in the idle whirl of worldly dissipation, or the engrossing cares of worldly business, and your end shall be accomplished.

But the memory of these slighted convictions and wasted hours shall hereafter rise upon your pathway, like some gloomy spectres of the pit, and fill the soul with fearful forebodings of sure and coming wrath. But surely ye are not desirous of adding new sorrows to those which age and care will necessarily bring with them. Then let the morning of your days be consecrated to God, that the evening of your life may be serene and peaceful.

But ye may not count on long life. Death makes no distinction. His unerring arrows are levelled

alike at the hearts of the young and the old. However buoyant your spirits, however healthful your frames, however robust your muscles, the seeds of dissolution are sown in your system, and are rapidly hastening to their development in death. How soon may the bloom, that is now nestling in beauty upon your cheek, wither, and the fires of health, that sparkle so brightly in your eye, grow dim before the touch of that dread destroyer to whom all ages and seasons are alike, and who knows no pity in his inexorable heart. To-day, then, ye children of the Church, ye sons and daughters of our Father's house, listen to the solemn admonition of the text, and harden not your hearts.

Again I remark, that when the Spirit of God is fastening his convictions upon our consciences, is a day of grace, in which it is awfully dangerous to harden our hearts. There is no man in a Christian land possessed of a conscience that has not felt its convictions, and trembled under its power.

How often in the hour of affliction, or under the pungent ministrations of God's word, does the thought force itself upon us, that the great things of religion are true, and demand our immediate and earnest attention? How often, at such times, has our guilt arisen in all its enormity, and judgment stared us in the face, and for awhile no effort could shake off these convictions from our hearts, or bring back our wonted indifference?

We plunged anew into the business and pleasures

of the world, determined, if possible, to banish our religious impressions by pre-occupying the mind with other things. But still the spectre conscience followed us, haunted every path that we took, shouted its cry of guilt into our ear, and pointed with its significant finger to the retributions of eternity, and it was not, until after long and desperate effort, that we could bid the phantom begone, and sink back into our former stupidity and insignificance.

That troublesome guest was sent by the Spirit of God on a message of mercy to your soul. You should have cherished his convictions, listened to his admonitions, and profited by his instructions. But you have yielded to Satan and the world, banished the monitor from your heart, and the consequence is, that the Spirit is grieved, and ye are nearer eternity with hearts more hardened, and consciences more seared than ever they were before.

Let no one trifle with religious impressions; let no one labor to banish spiritual convictions. This is to pronounce our own sentence, and fix the seal of heaven to our everlasting doom.

Again, the Sabbath is a precious season of grace. It was given us to turn aside from the world; to consider our relations, and our destiny; and to make preparation for it. God has blessed it with ordinances to teach us what he is, and what duties he requires of us. He has opened wide the doors of his sanctuary and bid us enter, in order that we may feed our starving souls upon the rich provisions of his

house. But by how many is this precious season abused! How many, who, instead of spending it in his worship, turn their feet from his house, and refrain not themselves from "the counsel of the ungodly;" nor from "the way of sinners" nor from "the seat of the scornful."

And thus they slight one of his plainest commandments, trifle with his sacred ordinances, and bring upon their souls that curse which shuts them out from the rest above. Or if they do enter his gates, how many, instead of worshipping Him, who "is a Spirit," "in spirit and in truth," pass the hours that should be devoted to his service in unreasonable slumbers, or permit their thoughts to wander with the fool's eyes to the end of the earth.

Oh, how fearful the account to be rendered by these despisers of his grace in that day, when God shall rise to deal with them in his wrath, to avenge the insult cast upon his ordinances, and to vindicate the integrity of his government, and the majesty of his throne. "Them that honor me," saith the Lord, "I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." Be wise, then, ye who enjoy your Sabbaths, and improve, whilst they last, these precious seasons of grace. Remember there are no Sabbath bells calling to the house of prayer in perdition, no soft hearts there, no flowing tears of penitence, no proud, stubborn wills subdued, no gospel entreaties, no Saviour offered, no Spirit promised, no hope, no mercy.

But, lastly, consider what it is to harden our hearts. It is to reject the gospel, until our habits of sin become confirmed to such a degree that we cease to feel its force. We all know that the harder a metal, or a material substance is, the less affected it is by any mechanical force brought to bear upon it. And the metal of the human heart is, so to speak, under the same natural law. If the force you bring to bear upon it does not bend it, or break it, it will consolidate it and beat it to hardness. If the moral argument, that is plied to-day, does not overcome our purposes, then to-morrow will it strike with less force, and make a less impression. If we resist, and stand out against the offers of the gospel to-day, then, by that act of resistance, do we gain a greater power of resistance, and though, hereafter, the same spiritual thunder may play around our hearts, their sensibilities may have become so callous and blunted, that it may not awaken the least emotion. In fine, to harden our hearts, is to resist the gospel, until the most forcible arguments, the most spirit stirring appeals, have no more effect upon us, than upon an Arctic iceberg, or a rock of adamant. And when such is the case, hope of recovery is but faint indeed. And does it not become us all to inquire how near we are to this state of hardness that feels no force? For years we may have been sitting under the sound of the gospel, but are yet entangled in the yoke of bondage; and the prospect of our being delivered eventually, and snatched as brands from the burning,

is becoming less certain each succeeding Sabbath ; for our habits of impenitence are confirming, and the fire that melts the wax hardens the clay.

Once we may have trembled at the voice of God, but we have permitted the precious opportunity to pass unimproved ; and our anxieties and religious impressions have departed with it. If our houses were on fire, if our persons or our property were exposed to the fury of the fierce devouring element, we would be awake and alive to everything about us ; and yet, when our immortal spirits are separated only by this thin partition of flesh and blood, that may be taken down in a moment, from "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," we are insensible to our danger, and postpone to some future season, the efforts that should be made vigorously and at once.

Is not this a fearful evidence that our hearts are hardening, and that the moral force which is spent upon them is beginning to lose its effect ? If we are now less under the influence of divine truth, than we were years, or even months ago, are not our habits of sin confirming ? And upon what principle of philosophy, natural or moral, is a rapidly confirming habit broken off by a repetition of those acts that produce confirmation ?

When will the difficulties in our way to salvation be less great than they are now ? When will more favorable circumstances come around us than we at present enjoy ? Would we plant a tree that we

wished to grow tall and straight, and yet permit it to pass from the twig to the branching oak, before we corrected its curvatures, or pruned its luxuriance? We are infected with a dangerous disease, that is working its way to our vitals, and threatening our final dissolution; and yet we refuse to call the physician's aid. Do we suppose the ragings of the consuming fever to be more under the power of medicine, than the first faint symptoms of its attack? And shall we bind ourselves with cords of vanity, and permit habits of sin to strengthen by repeated indulgence, and then hope to burst them asunder as Samson did the green withes wherewith he was bound? Shall the infant advance daily by appropriate food and care, from infancy to manhood; and shall our depravity not grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength, so long as we refuse to "cease to do evil, and learn to do well?"

Delusions such as these, the human heart loves to cherish; but they are delusions that terminate in "the second death." As before remarked, there is a point of sinful indulgence, even in this world, beyond which the Spirit of God may cease to strive; and men in their madness, like Esau, may sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. May I not say that men can wilfully reject the gospel, until God withdraws his gracious influences from them? And who may tell the consequences of that withdrawal? Who can fully comprehend what is embodied in that fearful language of God to rebellious Israel, "Ephraim is joined

to his idols: let him alone?" Who can tell what it is for a sinner to be let alone of God?

Providence of God! sent for the benefit of his children, and the chastisement of his enemies, let him alone. Let not prosperity excite his gratitude, nor adversity teach him humility. Let him take his course unawed by threatenings, and unmoved by love.

Whether the thunders of the Almighty peal around, or the sun shines in glory upon him, "he is joined to his idols; let him alone."

Ministers of the gospel, let him alone! Cry aloud and spare not; sound the alarm in the ears of others, but it shall not reach him. The chill of the second death is creeping upon him, and no voice of yours can awaken him from his untimely slumbers, or recall his spirit back to eternal things. Ministers of the gospel, let him alone.

Conscience, thou vicegerent of God on earth, let him alone. No longer lash him into fear by your terrible convictions, or point him with unerring finger to the sinner's doom. Go, wrap thy mantle about thee, and slumber in insensibility, until the grim messenger at last bid thee wake thy scorpion stings, and sleep no more for ever.

Spirit of the living God! let him alone. Go, let thine arrows fly thick and fast, until many a stubborn, rebellious soul, that has hitherto stood it out against all invitation and warning, shall come bending in penitential sorrow to the feet of Jesus, but leave him to the idols he has chosen, and to the lusts in which

his polluted heart is rioting. He has done deliberate despite to those sweetly-constraining influences of thine, that would have wooed and won him to my feet. Spirit of the living God ! let him alone.

Ordinances and means of grace, let him alone. Be ye to my people as the dews of Hermon, or as streams of water in the desert ; but be ye to *him* as the mountains of Gilboa, upon which no rain descends. Let every ordinance that he witnesses—let every sermon that he hears—let every prayer that is offered for his salvation, but aggravate his final condemnation. All this will fall upon him for the execution of that fearful sentence that knows no reversal, “He is joined to his idols, let him alone.” Oh ! if these be the consequences of refusing to listen to the voice of God,—if this be the doom of those who harden their hearts against his fear, “My soul, come not thou into their secret ; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united !”

In conclusion, my dear hearers, I have only to say, that the solemn voice of God has repeatedly sounded in your ears, and that every time it has been uttered, it has but increased your responsibility. You may have often and long disregarded it ; but, in infinite mercy, another opportunity is afforded you for heeding it, and for making your peace with God. Again disregard it, and hope may thenceforth be to you a stranger. Your day of grace, at best, is short,—oh, how short ! And yet how much is there to be done in it ! Life is fast ebbing. Time is receding—eternity is approaching, and soon your destiny will

be for ever fixed. "Whatsoever," then, "thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Oh! "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart."

Say, sinner, hath a voice within,
 Oft whispered to thy secret soul;
 Urged thee to leave the ways of sin,
 And yield thy heart to God's control?

Hath something met thee in the path
 Of worldliness and vanity,
 And pointed to the coming wrath,
 And warned thee from that wrath to flee?

Sinner, it was a heavenly voice,
 It was the Spirit's gracious call;
 It bade thee make the better choice,
 And haste to seek in Christ thine all.

Spurn not the call to life and light;
 Regard in time the warning kind.
 That call thou mayest not always slight,
 And yet the gate of mercy find.

God's Spirit will not always strive
 With hardened, self-destroying man;
 Ye who persist his love to grieve,
 May never hear his voice again.

Sinner, perhaps this very day,
 Thy last accepted time may be;
 Oh, shouldst thou grieve Him now away,
 Then hope may never beam on thee.

SERMON V.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND OUR PECULIAR DUTIES.

“For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father’s house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth, whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”—ESTHER iv. 14.

THIS book, whence our text is taken, contains a most interesting, and in many respects, a most thrilling narrative of Jewish history, during their subjection to the Medo-Persian yoke. It takes its name from Esther, the principal character introduced into it; and as a whole, is admirably calculated to illustrate the doctrine of providence, and the methods and instruments by which the great Ruler of the universe accomplishes his purposes of mercy and of judgment.

Esther, though the daughter of a Jewish captive, had been raised, for her beauty, to share with Ahasuerus the great in the throne and honors of his mighty empire. And whilst there, she became, in the hand of God, the instrument of preserving her people from the effects of a conspiracy, the most fearful and wicked, that had ever been hatched for the extermination of a whole race.

Haman, the wicked Haman, had been raised, by his obsequiousness and flattery, to become the favorite of the king. The latter, in his attachment and profuse-

ness, had heaped honor after honor upon him; and at last had promoted him above all the princes of his court, who were obliged to bend the knee before him whenever he entered the palace. This homage, Mordecai, the queen's cousin,* refused to pay him, which greatly excited his envy and indignation, for, intoxicated by the pride of power and place, he could not brook the idea of even one treating him with coolness or indifference. And in the spirit of a revenge, which had its origin in the bottomless abyss, he determined to free himself of his hated enemy, by plotting his destruction, and that of every individual of the nation to which he belonged. He therefore chooses, superstitiously, a day, which he thought would be auspicious for his purpose, and, by artifice and calumny, prevails upon the king to issue a decree, which, amongst the Medes and Persians, was immutable, for the extirpation of the Jews; and receives a commission to publish it through all the provinces of his extensive empire.

But God, who controls all things, even the actions of wicked men, without being the instigator or partaker of their sins, had so ordered it, in his providence, that, through the influence of Esther and her cousin, his infernal schemes should be defeated, and that, on the gallows which he had erected for Mordecai, he himself should be publicly suspended. Yet who can describe the anguish and terror of Mor-

* Esther was the daughter of Mordecai's uncle; hence, his own cousin.—Est. ii. 7.

decai and the Jews, subsequent to the issuing of the decree and pending its execution? Given up by an unalterable decree, into the hands of a malignant and powerful enemy, with no earthly hope of deliverance, they threw themselves into the arms of the strength of Israel and the Saviour thereof; and with fasting and mourning, spread their case before him.

Esther, shut up in the apartments of her palace, as Eastern women generally are, had heard nothing of all this until informed by some of her attendants, when she immediately despatched the king's chamberlain to inquire of her cousin the particulars. He immediately informs her through the chamberlain, of the whole conspiracy; and requests her intercession with the king for him and her people.

Esther excused herself, upon the ground that she had lately not been sent for by the king, and that it was as much as her life was worth to enter into his presence without being called; for should she do it, and he refuse to hold out the golden sceptre, her death would be the immediate consequence of her presumption.

Mordecai replies, that though the risk is great, the circumstances of the case require it; for should Haman succeed, she, being a Jewess, would not escape, even though in "the king's house, more than all the Jews;" but would most certainly perish in this universal overthrow of her nation: and though she hazarded her life by entering the king's presence unbidden, she run as great a hazard by refusing to make

the attempt. "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed."

Mordecai, strong in faith, was fully assured that she and his people, by some means or other, would be delivered of the Lord; and if Esther refused to venture her life in the cause, their enlargement would be attended by some remarkable judgment upon her and her family. Besides, who knew but that Providence had placed her in her present elevated position, in order to make her the deliverer of her nation in this perilous crisis of their history: "And who knoweth, whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

We have quoted this verse, my friends, not for the mere purpose of sketching this history of a Jewish danger and deliverance, but for the purpose of briefly unfolding, enforcing, and applying to our own individual cases, the truth taught in our text, viz., *that many of our most important duties, as in the case of Esther, arise out of the peculiar circumstances in which Providence and grace have placed us, and that a determination to hold our peace, and to refuse our efforts, when the ark of God is in danger, and we should speak out, will not leave us guiltless: but will expose us to a similar judgment with that which fell upon him, who buried his talents in the earth, and went and hid his Lord's money. "For unto whom much is given, of him shall be much required."*

If we are disposed to inquire, with Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" we shall find a speedy and satisfactory answer, not only in the book of divine revelation, but in the developments of providence around us. As God, in a great measure, carries on his plans, and accomplishes his purposes of mercy and grace through the instrumentality of the Church, every individual minister, and elder, and member of that Church, has the appropriate work of his own sphere and station, modified by existing circumstances, marked out for him; and any refusal on his part, to inquire into the nature of that work, or to perform it in dependence upon Divine grace, when it is pointed out, places him in an attitude of hostility to God and his providence, and exposes him, sooner or later, to the doom of the unprofitable servant.

We may forget that we are the "stewards of the manifold grace of God," but God does not forget it. We may be indifferent to the signs of the times, and refuse to "touch with one of our fingers," the materials of that mighty temple which the God of grace is erecting in the world, and may slumber on through the short day of our probation in the Church, but it will be to awake to a fearful reckoning, when we come to give an account of our stewardship, and to be weighed in the balances of infinite justice. To every one of us as his servants, is the King and Head of the Church, saying, "Occupy till I come." And everything around us reminds us that in a little while

the Judge will be at the door, and we shall hear his voice saying unto us, "Give an account of thy stewardship." Whatever, therefore, we do for our own personal salvation, or the salvation of others, we must do quickly. With David we are called upon to serve our generation by the will of God, and with David we are soon to fall asleep, and to be gathered to our fathers, whether our generation work is performed or not, and all regrets then over the abuse of our privileges, the misimprovement of our talents, and the non-performance of our duties, will be unavailing.

If, then, we have duties to perform, and those duties are modified by the circumstances of our lot, we cannot spend the time allotted for this exercise more properly than by an inquiry into their nature and character. If we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this, what is the time?

1st. It is a time in which the enemies of the Church, either through open and avowed infidelity, or through the medium of those heresies which deceive whilst they corrupt and destroy, are concentrating their forces to trample truth in the dust, and to subvert, if possible, the kingdom of the Redeemer. It is a time in which men are aiming to destroy the beauty, and force, and simplicity of the gospel, either by hiding it beneath the rubbish of their absurd traditions, or by making it a stepping-stone, by which vain and ambitious aspirants in the Church may pre-

sumptuously assume the keys of the kingdom, and lord it over God's chosen heritage.

It is a time in the Church in which power is rapidly stealing back from the many to the few, and when that blasphemous dogma—for I can call it nothing else,—which makes salvation to depend, not upon the blood of Jesus and the sanctification of his Spirit, but upon the submissive reception of external rites and ordinances, administered by self-styled successors of the apostles, is creating a haughty, despotic hierarchy in the Church, and reconstructing that mighty engine of ecclesiastical power over the bodies and the souls of men, which Luther, Calvin, and their noble coadjutors labored so long and so well to demolish.

It is a time, as in the days of Esther, when there is hatching a fearful conspiracy against the Church and the people of God, when the Haman of the day sits in the temple of God, and blasphemously claims all homage, either personally, or through the schemes of his Jesuitic emissaries, who are stretching their cordon around the little flock of God, cunningly spreading their nets to entrap the unwary, and seeking, like skilful generals, to destroy by artifice and intrigue, where they cannot overcome by open violence and force. You see them not in the spirit of Paul, but in the spirit of hell, becoming "all things to all men," if by any means they may gain their end. You may find them wherever power is to be wielded, or influence is to be gained,—the cunning

politician, the dignified statesman, the polished courtier, the learned professor, and the lordly bishop; down to the barefooted friar, the humble confessor, the tonsured monk, and the bead-carrying, "Ave-Maria"-muttering, sanctified-looking priest at the altar—assuming every shape; an angel of light or a spirit of darkness, as the case may require; yet all worked by one iron will, all united as the heart of one man, to rebuild the superstition and despotism of popery upon the ruins of civil and religious liberty. If the signs of the times do not indicate such an effort as this, we have totally mistaken their character.

2d. It is a time in which that infidelity which has so long skulked in dens and caves, again stalks forth to the light, and presents its embattled front before the armies of the living God; not, it is true, with the same bold, blasphemous daring, which characterized it in the days of the French Revolution, when it proclaimed to the world that there was no God, and that death was an eternal sleep; but under the artful, and a more cunning, form of an assumed rational Christianity, it makes its stab at the very vitals of our pure and holy religion, and fritters away the truth of God into senseless and unmeaning fables. It comes not, as in the Reign of Terror, to exalt a common prostitute to the throne of reason, and then bow down and worship her, but to exalt that reason itself to the throne of God, and to make the dicta of a depraved and blinded understanding the standard

by which the holy and sublime mysteries of the gospel are to be measured and interpreted—the centre around which they are all to revolve and pay their homage.

This is the rationalism of the day, which, spun forth from a vain philosophy, has spread over Germany—the land of Luther and Melancthon,—poisoning the very fountains whence the Reformation sprung,—sending forth, like the burning volcano, its streams of desolation over the Christian Church, taking from it everything that is green and flourishing, and pleasant to the eye and the heart, and leaving it barren and fruitless as the desert of sand. This is human reason, which infidelity considers a sufficient guide to the knowledge of “the holy,” and which, instead of sitting in humble, listening attitude at the vestibule of the temple, to catch the oracle of inspiration, boldly lifts the veil, enters the most holy place, lays her sacrilegious hand upon the ark of the testimony, and sweeps from off the mercy-seat the blood of the everlasting covenant. This is the rational Christianity that denies the Trinity, the incarnation and death of the Son of God; nay, in a word, that ridicules as a fable the truth that sin exists, and that Christ died to deliver us from its guilt and power; and, under the specious pretence that reason is to be the judge of revelation, and that nothing but what she can fully understand and decide upon is to be received as truth, it carries its votaries forward step

by step, until they are lost in the mazes of a gloomy and cheerless atheism.

And happy would it be for the Church and the world, if this soul-benumbing, atheistic, philosophical Christianity had been confined in its influence to those who first taught and received it; but, like the leaven in the lump, it has been spreading and spreading, until it has traversed the ocean, reached our own land, and is working its baleful influences in the minds and hearts of editors at the press, of ministers at the altar, and of those who are occupying positions in society where they can mould and shape the destiny of the masses around them; and, where its influence will stop and the barrier be raised beyond which it cannot go, time and providence only can develope.

3d. I remark that it is a time of great commotion in the social and political world. I need scarcely advert to the events which, for the last six months, have been occurring in Europe, with which you are all familiar. Though they came suddenly upon the world, they were not unforeseen. Europe is in convulsions, and the events that shall yet happen will probably be unsurpassed in their magnitude by any political occurrences since the fall of the Roman Empire. Everywhere is the cloud of war or civil discord arising. One hour upturns a throne; another, and a new republic is the crater of a new volcano. Those natural passions and instincts of men for freedom, which have so long been bound by the iron bands of

despotism, have burst their shackles, and, carried away by the power of that impulse, they have become as ungovernable as the ocean in a storm.

No man can say what city or what state this day is not heaving by this mighty earthquake of human passion. No man can say where the lawless spirit of the mob is not reigning triumphant. No man can say what dark deeds of crime and blood are not now perpetrating by those who have arisen in their might to execute the judgments and avenge the oppressions of centuries. No man can tell what ties of life and blood are sundering, what instincts of our common nature are being rooted out, or what laws of God and man are profaned. The crisis looked for has come; the trial hour of Europe is upon her. Old landmarks are removed; systems of hoary despotism, that had laid their foundations so deep in human ignorance and superstition, that they thought them immutable, have been heaved up from their bases by this mighty eruption of human mind, and lie in scattered and disjointed fragments around.

The battle between the divine right of kings and the people has begun, and where will the end be? When will these scenes of death and carnage cease? Or when will a new and better order of things arise, as by the word of Omnipotence, from this dark and confused chaos? Is despotism crushed? or is another Phœnix to arise out of its ashes? Has one tyrant been put down, only to pave the way for a hundred others? We see not there "the beginning of the end."

Society is dissolving itself into its original elements, and how is it to be remodelled and reformed? I need not say to a Christian assembly, that there is but one really conservative principle in the world, and that is the religion of Jesus Christ. Without it, men become either the serfs of tyrants without, or the slaves of their own blind passions within. The history of the world—the history of these last six months—is evidence of this truth. Without this, the ship of state, cut loose from its old moorings, will be sent adrift upon a stormy sea, to founder and to perish. And this is the fear of every reflecting Christian in Europe and America. Nothing but the religion of Christ can bring light out of this darkness, and order out of this confusion.

And for the introduction of this necessary element in human liberty and human happiness, the way is opening. Where truth was once trodden down and crushed, it has now “free course.” Restrictions have been removed; unjust laws have fallen with the tyrants who made them; and where, but a few months ago, the way of truth was hedged up by almost insuperable barriers, and its ministers and friends were subjected to the most annoying persecutions, it can now be proclaimed and taught, with none to molest or make afraid. And if in this we recognise the finger of God, we also see plainly written the duty of the Church. If a door, great and effectual, is opened unto us, it becomes us, at once, to arise in our strength and enter; and in the name of

the great Captain of our Salvation, to take possession of the kingdom. Depend upon it, that mighty results, for good or evil, shall grow out of these political and social agitations. And though human sagacity may not foresee all their consequences, yet who can doubt but what they have given an impulse to the great ocean of mind that will be felt for ever through all its boundless depths?

If such, then, as I have briefly and imperfectly enumerated them, are the signs of the times, and the providential dispensations around us; and we are in God's kingdom and church on earth; and we are in it for such a time as this—we are in it, not to be mere idle spectators of passing events around us, but as the stewards of “the manifold grace of God,” to whom he has committed a solemn charge, and whom he has commanded to occupy until he come. We are here to labor for the deliverance and enlargement of Zion; and to make our instrumentality to be felt, in whatever way they can best promote this great end of human life. And if this be true, and who can doubt it, the great query is, What must we do? How shall we best bring about this deliverance and enlargement of the Church? or make this wrath of man redound to the glory of God?

First, then, I remark that, under the peculiar circumstances of the times, *our charity should abound*. Common interests and dangers should ever unite in a common bond. When that decree of the royal Persian had gone forth, which consigned a whole

nation to fearful and remediless destruction, how strongly must their common peril have knit together every member of that widely extended family of Israel! Those little feuds and animosities that had separated and estranged neighbors and friends, were buried in oblivion; and all were united, as with the heart of one man, for each other's protection and safety. And should not the same spirit characterize the Israel of God at this day? Shall the Herods and the Pilates of the day, league for the destruction and corruption of the Church? And shall they, who are so deeply interested in her welfare, permit an unnatural estrangement to render abortive all their efforts for her deliverance and enlargement? There is too much at stake, too much that requires the effort of united Christianity, to be overlooked or disregarded in petty disputings about words and forms, that are unessential to the existence of true piety.

Whilst spiritual despotism and infidelity from without, and cold, calculating, worldly-mindedness within, are threatening, if not to destroy the Church, to leave it but a name to live; they, who love the interests of Zion and of Zion's King, should present an unbroken front to the foe without, and an equally decided attitude of hostility to the traitor within. And we trust that we see, in the signs of the times, the commencement of a new era—the dawn of a better day to the Church—in this respect. We trust that we have seen, in what has occurred during the past year, both at home and abroad, a determination

on the part of evangelical Christians to lay aside their petty animosities, to band together in defence of the common truth, and to move together in harmony to their common heaven. And though all the plans of this great gospel organization are to a degree crude and imperfect, and though great caution is to be used, and much is to be done to remove existing difficulties, we think we can see in it the germ of that tree whose spreading branches are to fill the earth, and can catch, through it, faint glimpses of that happy day when the "watchmen shall see eye to eye," in the things that make for the prosperity of Zion.

Not that we would advocate any union at the expense of principle. True love requires no such sacrifice; and every compact thus entered into, and every bond thus formed, would be but a rope of sand. The truth of Jesus is too sacred, ever to be bartered for a corrupt harmony or a false peace. Yet why may not the Church have its federal union, as well as the country, in which, whilst the peculiar laws, and customs, and institutions of each member of the compact are left untouched, they may stand, like these states, upon a common platform, and if not legislate, at least consult for the good of the whole. Zeal for the truth is not bigotry, and is perfectly compatible with that charity which "thinketh no evil; which rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." And if the enemies of the truth

are combining against us, and plotting our destruction, let the army of the living God, animated by a common zeal, and aiming at a common result, stand together like a Macedonian phalanx. -

Certain it is, that Christian union has much to do with the world's evangelization. It strengthens the cause, by the concentrated effort it gives it; develops true religion in its right direction; shuts up the mouth of infidels and papists; and restores to the Church that lovely feature of primitive Christianity, which constrained its enemies to exclaim, "Behold how these Christians love one another."

Second. The signs of the times require that *our individual influence should be felt*. It was Esther's influence with the king, that unmasked the conspiracy of the wicked Haman, and delivered herself and nation from threatened destruction. How much depended upon her effort, her prudence, and her zeal. A refusal to engage in the enterprise, or one false and imprudent step, might have been fatal to her and her people. And she stands out this day, in the history of the Church, as a monumental proof of the evil that may be averted, and of the good that may be accomplished, by personal influence and effort, timely and judiciously used.

"None of us liveth to himself." God has bound men together by various bonds, that they may exert upon each other a beneficial and saving influence. And however humble the sphere of an individual may be, he wields a mighty influence for God or Satan,

for good or evil, for heaven or hell. This moral power is exerted and felt in the family circle, and in all the social, civil, and religious relations in life. It is operative every day and hour that we live; and even after death, it will continue to operate through future ages and generations. What a tremendous responsibility! And how much it is enhanced by the peculiar circumstances of our lot, and of the times in which we live. Well may each one of us solemnly inquire as a parent, friend, citizen, or professor of religion, Am I on the Lord's side, or on the side of Satan? am I with Christ, or against him? am I helping to save, or to destroy the souls of men? If others sell themselves to commit sin, and are willing to toil as the bond slaves of Satan, shall they who call themselves the disciples of Him "whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light," sit down in apathetic indifference to those precious interests that lay so near their Saviour's heart, and that were the moving cause of all that he did and suffered? No! this is to lack the spirit of true discipleship, and to rank ourselves not amongst the friends, but the enemies of Christ. This is to show the form of godliness, whilst we deny its power, and to have a name to live whilst we are dead.

No true Christian heart, warmed with love for Jesus and zealous for his cause, can look abroad at the efforts that are making to corrupt the Church, and to throw over its light the pall of infidelity and superstition; or can look at the wide fields now open for

Christian labor; without raising his voice against this unhallowed conspiracy, and straining every nerve to arouse the slumbering Church to a sense of her dangers and her duties. "England," said a celebrated son of Britain on the eve of a mighty naval battle, "expects every man to do his duty." And from higher motives, and with more glorious results in view, we may add—in time of peril, Heaven expects every Christian soldier to be at his post, and to do his duty.

It is no time for drones, or idlers, or cowards, in the camp of the Lord of Hosts. The Church and the world, are on the eve of a mighty struggle—a struggle which is to terminate in the downfall of the one or the other; and he, who is not at his post, with armor bright and burnished, and ready for the conflict, has mistaken the character of the age in which he lives; and the end for which he has been called into the Church of the Redeemer. For who knoweth but that he has come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Let every one of us rest assured that our individual influence is one of the precious talents that the king has committed to our trust; and he who uses it to distract and dissever the Church; or to corrupt and destroy the world; instead of employing it to advance that cause which God, in a peculiar manner, has committed to his people here, is preparing for himself a final home with hypocrites and unbelievers.

Again, I remark that the time and circumstances

in which we live demand *earnest, importunate, and united prayer to God*. To whom shall we go, but unto him? He is our only help in the time of trouble; and, if he hide his face and desert us, "vain is the help of man."

Well did Esther realize this, when she determined to enter the king's presence unbidden, and that at the risk of her life. She not only fasted and prayed herself, but she besought her friends to fast and pray with her; so that God might put his great strength in her, and bless her perilous undertaking. And when we look around upon the mighty enemy that is coming in upon us like a flood, threatening to devastate the Church, and to sap the foundations of our Zion, are we not constrained to cry out, with the king of Judah in his peril, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." And if this mighty conspiracy of superstition and infidelity be not crushed, it will be for the want of earnest, importunate prayer, on the part of those who are so deeply interested in the issue. Prayer is the lever that moves the arm that moves the universe; and if it bring down God from his throne, and array him upon our side, who shall be against us? What barrier of the adversary shall not be thrown down? What difficulty in the way of the world's salvation shall not be overcome. Let Him but smile upon our efforts, and though the combined powers of earth and hell come up to the

assault, they shall be scattered as the chaff before the driving wind.

Then let our united cry go up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, for his Spirit to raise up a standard against this mighty flood of the enemy. What! shall we hold our peace, when Satan and his minions are threatening to take from us the last hope of a doomed and dying world? What! shall we not cry with the souls under the altar, "How long, O Lord," when that dread power, which has drunk the blood of the martyrs, and wearied out the saints of the Most High, is again hatching another fearful conspiracy against the Church, and laboring to lay upon her the iron yoke of the heaven-accursed Antichrist? What! shall no prayer come up before the throne, when the heaven-daring infidelity of the day, threatens to rob us of our Bibles and our Saviour; and when the self-styled advocates of reason would blot out from the creed of the Church, and snatch from the hopes of dying men, the only blessed name under heaven, by which they can be saved; and leave them to grope their way through this dark world to that which is to come, with no other light than the feeble rays of weak, misguided, human reason?

Have we no interest in a world of sinners? No concern for the countless myriads of the present generation, who are so soon to appear with us before the bar of God? And, with our eye resting upon this perishing harvest, and our ear pierced with the

cry of these dying millions, have we no prayer to put up to Him who controls human hearts, that he would fill the field with multitudes of devoted and efficient laborers? Surely we have come to the kingdom to pray in such a time as this, when we have so many arguments with which to fill our mouths. When Queen Esther had entered the presence of her royal husband, the golden sceptre was extended, and he promised her whatsoever she should ask, to the half of his kingdom. It was a large promise, worthy of the riches and royalty of the most munificent sovereign of the globe. Yet, what was this, or what are all the gifts that have ever been heaped by the noble and beneficent on their courtiers and friends, compared to the promises that cluster around the mercy seat; and that invite us to bring our petitions there? There the golden sceptre is ever extended; there is the rich profusion of the grace of Him who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty, might be rich:" There is light, and life, and peace, and joy—all in the gift of our Emmanuel Jesus—and all ready to be bestowed, "without money and without price," upon every humble petitioner at the throne of grace.

And how many arguments have we to present, how many pleas to offer, to induce God to arise and plead his own cause! We can plead for his own mercy's sake; we can plead his promise to the fathers; his own covenant engagement as the great Captain of salvation to conduct his Church safely through all

her difficulties, and to bring her to the promised rest. We can plead for his own glory's sake—the glory which he revealed in the pillar of cloud and fire, that accompanied his Israel in all her march—the glory which he revealed more fully in his manifestation in the flesh, and in the mighty workings and influences of his Spirit shed down from above. We can plead that this glory will be tarnished, and that this name that is above every other name, will be dishonored, if the enemies of his Church are permitted to triumph, whilst its friends sit weeping, like a virgin desolate, amidst her ruins. And shall not arguments and pleas such as these, coming from humble, devoted, united hearts, move the Majesty of the heavens and command the blessing?

4th. The times require *self-denial, and the entire consecration of ourselves and property to God*. Such was the case with Esther, and the Jews. They fasted in their extremity; and doubtless, were all the facts of that perilous crisis known, it would be found that no means were left untried, and no expense was spared in taking measures for the common safety. And the interest which every member of the Church has in the Redeemer's kingdom, should banish every feeling of selfishness, and lead to the most enlarged liberality. And if the enemies of the truth have their overflowing coffers; and are everywhere sending forth their emissaries, with a full hand, to scatter their poison, and carry on their work of darkness; shall we withhold from the treasury of

the Lord the means so necessary to counteract their baneful influence, and to fill the world with truth and righteousness? O! this is not the spirit of true discipleship. This is not the characteristic of those who are not their own, but who are bought with a price; and who are bound, therefore, to glorify God in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are God's. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Church of God!—ye know what the Saviour has done for you. Ye know that when "he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty, might be rich;" ye know that he perilled all for your salvation—that he redeemed you "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold," but with his heart's warm blood; and shall he ask your aid—your co-operation—in this great work of human redemption—and meet with a refusal? "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."

Remember, that so long as God makes use of human instrumentality, he will find willing hearts and hands to accomplish his purposes. And if we, the Church so highly favored in gospel lands, refuse to do it, he will raise up others to supply our places, and, despite of all our unwillingness to place the crown of the universe upon his head, the Stone which the builders rejected shall become the Head of the corner. The deliverance and enlargement promised to Zion shall come to it, and if it come not with our

aid, it will come without it; but let us beware, lest, in the covetous spirit of the age, we be found withholding our tithe of the means with which God hath blessed us, and thus bring upon ourselves the curse of Meroz, who came not up to “the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord, against the mighty.”

Never was there an enterprise that had so many marks of dignity about it, as that of missions, and yet, how many overlook it, or treat it with contempt. Speak of it, and the scoffing infidel raises the hue and cry of fanaticism, and tells you that he fears for the intellect of its advocates. Speak of it, and the baptized worldling looks at you with amazement. His little heart has never expanded beyond the narrow circumference of his little self, and what has he to do with the world? Let others perish if they may, it is enough for him to save himself. Speak of it, and the calculating professor has a thousand objections to urge—the extravagance of agents, the impracticability of the plans, and the improbability of success—and whils he grasps his money-bags with a death gripe, he tells you with perfect indifference to the world’s wants, that “Charity begins at home.” Speak of it, and you may hear even the true Christian, whilst he acknowledges the dignity and importance of the enterprise, calculating how little of his luxuries he may retrench, or how few of his comforts he may deny himself, in order to carry it on. But let infidelity oppose it, let lukewarm Christianity sit

calmly by it, it is a glorious cause, and it shall prevail.

Men can live as they list, but Jesus is destined to conquer and to reign, whether they share in his victories, or be trampled beneath his triumphal car. If they will withhold from the treasury of the Lord, the tithe of the means with which he has blessed them, let them do so; the final exaltation of the Church is to be accomplished through the instrumentality of man, and if they are willing to be excused from taking part in the glorious enterprise, be it so. Jesus and his cause shall not lack means or friends. The silver and the gold are his, and there are thousands of willing souls who are ready to cast into his treasury, either of their penury, or of their abundance. But let those who refuse to bear their part prepare for the reckoning, for others shall reap the reward, and wear the crown, whilst they will be left to mourn their folly with the unprofitable and the faithless.

Lastly, I remark that the times require *strong faith*. It was a dark hour to Mordecai, when he heard the proclamation of that unalterable decree which consigned him and his nation to remediless destruction, yet it was not one of despair, for "unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Fully was he persuaded, that, in the providence of God, enlargement and deliverance would come to them from some quarter. And forbidding as may be the aspect of things around us, and gloomy as the prospect to our short-sightedness may appear,

let no true Christian's heart despond. "The heathen may rage, and the people may imagine a vain thing, the kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers may take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. But He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision."

Difficulties may meet us, dangers may threaten us, dark clouds may gather around us, but the difficulties shall be removed, the dangers shall be escaped, and "it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light." Like the disciples on stormy Galilee, the Church may be out in the tempest where the breakers foam, and the mountain billows roll, but she is safe; for Jesus, the master of the elements, is on board, and one word from his blessed lips, one movement of his omnipotent arm, and their wild warfare is hushed into the calmness of a summer evening sunshine. No weapon that has ever been formed against him has prospered, and his success in times past, affords sure ground of encouragement that he shall still go on conquering and to conquer, "until he hath put all enemies under his feet." Dismiss then your fears. The Church is safe. Like its ancient type, the ark of Noah, it shall but rise amidst the swelling tumult that gathers around it, and, like that well-freighted ark, it shall ride in safety over the wreck of a doomed and desolated world.

And now, in conclusion, *let us awake to our duties*

and meet our responsibilities, with true Christian fortitude and self-denial. Let there be no drones in the hive, no idlers in the vineyard, no cowards in the camp, but let each, in his sphere, exert the influence and consecrate the means, with which God has blessed him, for the advancement of that cause, for which Jesus the Saviour stripped himself of all his heavenly glory, and submitted to the humility of the manger, and the ignominy of the cross. Remember, we cannot change our circumstances, nor the order of Providence. Remember, we cannot annihilate the facts which stare us in the face. We have come to the kingdom for such a time as this, and woe be to him who holds his peace, and refuses his efforts or his prayers. The Church is moving onward to her destiny, and all the mighty movements of the age, however adverse they may appear, are helping her to accomplish it. And woe be to that man or to that woman who can sit down in ignorance and indifference to the signs of the times, or who feels no disposition to put up the prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" We may hold our peace, and hug the property which God may so soon remove from us, but let us prepare ourselves for the fearful reckoning, when he shall come to make inquisition for the blood of ruined and murdered souls, that shall be found in our skirts.

How many motives address us? How many arguments, on every hand, urge us to activity and self-consecration in this great and noble work? Soon

your lamp of life will be extinguished ; soon the shadows of the dark valley will be on you ; soon the clods of the valley will cover you. And you owe it to yourselves to labor while you may, with all diligence, in bringing trophies of grace to the feet of Jesus, for all such trophies will enhance the blessings of your own salvation, and will set starry gems in your crown of rejoicing. You owe it to your children, and to your country, and to the generations that shall succeed you, for otherwise you cannot be established and enlarged at home. You owe it to the idolatrous nations, who are rushing headlong, in unbroken ranks, down to the gulf of perdition. You owe it to your Lord and Master, who hath bought you with his blood, sustained you by his grace, and prepared for you blissful mansions as your everlasting home. Up then, ministers, elders, and church members to your generation work. You have mighty co-workers, and there is no cause for despondency. The Eternal smiles upon you from his throne, the great King and Captain of your salvation is leading in the van, and the Holy Spirit's almighty agency is ever promised you. You must, therefore, be finally successful. However dark the future may appear, you shall at length triumph, as did Esther and the Jews, "For who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb,

And shall I fear to own his cause,
Or blush to speak his name?

Must I be carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this dark world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight if I would reign;
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by thy word.

Thy saints in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
With faith's discerning eye.

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all thine armies shine,
In robes of victory through the skies,
The glory shall be thine.

SERMON VI.

THE CHRISTIAN PARADOX.

“When I am weak, then am I strong.”—2 Cor. xii. 10.*

THE objects of human knowledge, though numerous in themselves, are few, when compared with the almost infinite variety beyond the grasp of human intellect, and the range of human thought. We may boast the powers of human genius, and extol its discoveries, yet how narrow, how circumscribed are its walks, when placed in contrast with those limitless fields of truth that have never yet been explored.

Who has soared higher into the regions of the limitless and eternal, than the immortal Newton? He measured the earth as with a line, and weighed it as in his balance. He wandered away to the bright worlds above us, counted their number, measured their orbits, and watched their courses, as they wheeled in their mighty revolutions around each other, and the eternal throne. And yet you hear the dying Newton exclaim, as he looks back over his long and eventful life, “I have been but gathering pebbles upon the sea-shore, whilst the great ocean of truth lies unexplored before me.” It seemed to him as

* This was Mr. M’Ginnes’s last sermon, preached on the Sabbath immediately preceding his death.

if he had been but amusing himself with bubbles upon the surface, whilst the depth of nature's mysteries remained yet a sealed book. What he knew, was vast, was wonderful; what he did not know, was infinite, was stranger still.

How often is it urged against the Christian religion by drivelling deists and infidels, that it is too mysterious to be credible, and that they are not willing to admit what they cannot comprehend. And what can they comprehend? Can they comprehend the God, whose existence they themselves acknowledge? Can they enter his secret soul, define his essence and mode of existence, or by searching, find him out to perfection? Can they comprehend the world of nature? Can they tell you what are those stars that cluster around the brow of night? What mysterious attraction whirls them on their axis and carries them along their orbits, true to their centres as the magnetic needle to the pole? Can they tell how the dead seed buried in the earth shoots forth a living blade? And how life springs up from rottenness? Can they comprehend their own matchless forms, so "fearfully and wonderfully made?" Can they tell what is life? what its origin? and where its seat? Why beat their palpitating hearts? What moves their active limbs, or carries the red current through every artery and vein? What stops them at a breath, and makes the animated man a lump of earth? Can they comprehend that thinking, restless *something* within them, the soul? what its nature?

its essence? Is it matter? Is it spirit? How came it the tenement of these clayey tabernacles? By what process does it give strength and motion to these nervous fibres, and strength and activity to these swelling muscles? Alas! they cannot tell. The finger of the Almighty has written mystery on everything around them, and about them; above them, and beneath them. And yet, forsooth, they must not receive anything but what they can comprehend; and they must, therefore, reject Revelation, because it is too mysterious for belief. Such folly might well excite a smile, were it not for the consequences involved. The Bible has nothing to fear from such arguments or such opponents.

The analogy of reason teaches us, that if the God of nature and providence is mysterious and unsearchable in his ways, the God of Revelation cannot be otherwise. And so we find it. At almost every step in the Bible, propositions meet us which require our belief, not because they are fully comprehensible, but because we have evidence that God has uttered them; and they rest their truthfulness, therefore, upon the authority of Him that cannot lie. There are mysteries in the doctrines of the Bible far beyond our ken to fathom. And as a result of faith in these doctrines, there are mysteries in Christian experience, no less strange and wonderful. And such to the hearer, unenlightened by the Spirit, is the paradox of the apostle before us, "When I am weak, then am I strong." You may call it absurd if you please, it is neverthe-

less, a true proposition. You may smile at it as the dreamings of an enthusiast, yet every babe in Christ has demonstrated its reality.

What heathen philosopher, amidst all the volumes that have been written on the subject of human morals and happiness, ever exhorted his hearers to be weak in order to be strong? What modern deist has ever thought of embodying such a proposition as this in his code of morals,—“A man must become weak before he can be strong?” Oh, does not the light of God shine forth in every line of the sacred page, and prove the Bible to be what it professes to be, “the great mystery of godliness?” Is it strange, then, that Christians are to be wondered at, when they admit so strange an hypothesis as this, and affirm their greatest strength to be in their greatest weakness? No wonder that they are a peculiar people, and that the world knoweth them not, for the hidden sources of their religion and of their happiness are amongst the deep things of God.

“Most gladly,” says Paul, “will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. I take pleasure in infirmity, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong.” This language expresses Paul’s experience, not so much as an apostle, as a Christian. And our design is to consider in what this weakness consists, and how it becomes an occasion of strength.

1st. *What is the weakness to which the apostle*

refers.—It is not bodily infirmity. He is referring to a peculiar state of mind, to express which, the term “weak,” figuratively used, is well adapted. Nor does he refer to the reality, but to the apprehension of this weakness, for the two may widely differ. In the former view of the subject, all men are weak, but it is not an occasion of strength to all.

The word of God plainly teaches that the fall has left all men not only without righteousness, but without strength. By nature men are helpless as to all the purposes of the divine life. There is no soundness in them. Their carnal minds are enmity against God, and they cannot, because they will not, come to Christ, that they may have life. Yet how few are sensible of this painful fact. They are alive without the law; and, like the Laodiceans, fancy themselves “rich and increased with goods, and as having need of nothing, and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” And he, who, in the delirium of fever, imagines himself in health, and strives, despite the soothing counsels of his physician and friends, to leave his couch, is not more mistaken than the deluded sinner, who sneers at these solemn declarations of the Bible and the pulpit as mere cant, and boasts his native power and strength. Indeed, men will sooner acknowledge their guilt than their inability, for, in the blindness of their depravity, sin is with them a matter of little moment. But to acknowledge themselves without strength, would be to compromit

the dignity of human nature, and to lay the axe at the very root of their pride and glory. Hence you often hear them confess, that they have not done what they ought to have done, or are not what they ought to be. And though they have never made trial of their strength, yet they always rest upon the presumption of their competency.

It is not, therefore, to the reality of our weakness that the apostle refers, but to our apprehension of it; and this, not as the result of any mere unaided investigation of the human mind into its condition, but as the result of the effectual operation of God's Spirit, for it is the Spirit that quickeneth. He illuminates the dark chambers of the soul by his heavenly light, and brings manifest to the day its hidden things of darkness. He awakes it from its lethargy, and breathes into it, by his Almighty power, the breath of spiritual and eternal life. Convictions of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come, are awakened. The sinner is no longer alive without the law, for that law, in all its spirituality and extent, has come home with light and power upon his conscience. Anxiety and alarm succeed to peace and security. Indifference gives way to effort, and not a moment is lost until the great question of the soul's salvation is asked and satisfactorily answered. Then, and not till then, does he truly realize his weakness, and his entire dependence upon sovereign grace, for all those changes of relation and of state that make meet for heaven. And surely, when the burden of his guilt is

removed, and the light of life has beamed in upon his soul, he is not likely to forget the important lesson taught him in the hour of his agony, or to presume upon his native ability. Nay, the more he yields himself to the Holy Spirit, the more clearly does he see and feel how necessary it is to have the power of Christ resting upon him, in order to his abounding in every good word and work.

Again, this sense of weakness is learned from other means, from observation and experience. As the great leading principles of human nature are in all minds, Christians may judge of their own tendency to declension from the history of others. They hear and see multitudes falling around them, who promised fair to be bright and shining lights in the world, and who seemed much more likely to stand than themselves. How many did Bunyan's Pilgrim meet, with their faces turned from the heavenly Zion, and who, either discouraged or frightened by some untoward event or singular occurrence, were hastening back as fast as possible to the city of destruction! How many careless loiterers, who seemed indifferent whether they made any progress in the way of holiness or not? How many sleeping upon enchanted ground? Each case of declension, and each pitiable object crying in his ears, as with a thousand tongues, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Bunyan was a Christian, and his pilgrim was but a history of his own observation and expe-

rience, and others stand in the same circumstances, and have the same voice of warning.

Who can read the Scriptures, and learn of the declension and falls of men so distinguished for piety as many of them were, and not fear for his own? Behold Abraham, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, betrayed into dissimulation by his unbelief. See Jacob devising treachery against his brother, Moses speaking unadvisedly with his lips, Job cursing the day of his birth, David staining his hands with murder and adultery, Solomon playing the fool, and Peter the coward, and who is not ready to exclaim, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Or, to breathe forth the prayer, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe."

The events of life often enlarge our self-acquaintance. Who knows what he is until he is tried, or is beset by his own peculiar temptations? Our besetting sins differ according to constitution and circumstance, and what may be a matter of no consequence to one person, and easily avoided by him, is a strong temptation to another; and well does the adversary know this, and takes advantage of these peculiarities of our depraved nature. When Balaam saw that Balak could not prevail against Israel, either by force or enchantment, he taught the King of Moab to cast a stumbling-block in their way,—to lead them to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And he who prevailed not by force or enchantment,

prevailed by artifice and stratagem, for his deluded victims separated themselves to that shame. As Joab adhered to David in the rebellion of Absalom, and yet turned aside after Adonijah, so may we be firm in one peril, and yet fall in another. He who despises the world's wealth may pant after its honors, and he who is indifferent to fame, may be allured by the blandishments of pleasure. Satan could not entice Solomon to ask for riches, but he knew the strong passions of his heart, and suited his temptations to their nature. And Solomon, with all his wisdom, was snared and taken. He could not persuade Judas to betray the Saviour for the world's honors, but he dazzled him with the glare of riches, and what worldly fame could not, avarice accomplished.

And in his own experience the Christian finds the same artifice practised—the same appeals made to the besetting sins of his nature—the same inability of himself to ward off the fiery darts of the wicked one. How often has he resolved and re-resolved, and done the same? How often has he wept tears of sorrow over his fall, and extricated himself from the toils, and before he was well aware, found himself again in the net? Such is human—such is Christian weakness.

Afflictions, too, are frequently called temptations, because they try and prove us. Their legitimate tendency is to work patience, yet how often do we murmur? They are to produce in us “the peaceable fruits of righteousness,” but how seldom do they make

the intended impression, or bring us forth as gold seven times tried in the fire? Who has not thus been led to question the reality of his religion, and to mourn his deficiencies? And where will the mystery end? Who can understand his enemies? Who can say, I have made my heart clean,—I am pure from sin? Thus the Christian seems worse only because he is wiser. He now learns how far his weakness extends. Arduous duties press upon him on every side. The race that is set before him is to be run. God and the Saviour are to be glorified. The exhortations of divine inspiration bind him to be “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” His own immortal interests are to be secured, his Christian graces are to be in active exercise, and the enemies who seek to destroy him are to be overcome. He has relative duties to perform to the families with which he is connected, to the church to which he belongs, and to the world in which he lives. “And who is sufficient for these things.” “To will is present with him, but how to perform that which is good, he finds not. When he would do good, evil is present with him. The good that he would he does not, but the evil which he would not, that he does.” Gladly would he take the wings of a dove, and fly away and be at rest, but the wires of his cage tell him that he is a prisoner. He would sing, but his voice is untuned, and his harp is suspended upon the willows. A retrospect of his former experience humbles him, and he is ready to cry out with one of old,

“ ‘Oh ! that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when, by his light, I walked through darkness.’ Oh, that I could trust his promises as I once could, and behold again those excellencies in the Saviour which first ravished my newborn heart :

“ ‘Wretch that I am, to wander thus
In chase of false delight !
Let me be fastened to thy cross,
Rather than lose thy sight.

“ ‘Make haste my days to reach the goal,
And bring my heart to rest
On the dear centre of my soul,
My God, my Saviour’s breast.’ ”

He feels inadequate to perform the least duty ; how much more, were he called to offer up an Isaac, or to die at the stake. He feels unable to order his spirit aright before the world, or to endure with Christian temper the trifling vexations of the hour ; yea, with a heart so vile as his, what security has he against the greatest sins ? Reputation and common prudence, the great safeguards of the world without, have been so often broken in upon, that even in them he can feel no certain confidence of victory ; and he prays with David, not only “ cleanse thou me from secret faults,” but “ keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.”

And what is there to meet all this weakness ? When he examines, he finds nothing about him suffi-

cient for it. He cannot depend upon the grace that he received at regeneration. He could just as easily live to-day upon the food of yesterday, or last week, as enjoy spiritual life without fresh communications from the Spirit. Nor can he depend on frames or feelings, which constitutional action, the health of the body, or a thousand other circumstances may change. Frames and feelings are not food, they are merely cordials in their nature, and rather exhilarate than nourish. Nor can he depend upon his vows or resolutions. He has seen too often their vanity in binding his depraved heart. Though seeming invincible, they have yielded in the hour of temptation, and before the assaults of the enemy, they were but as a broken reed, or as a wall of vapor. Nor can he depend on means or ordinances. He values them as channels through which divine grace is communicated, and he will be found in the use of them, because to do so is both his privilege and his duty. But means are nothing, unless rendered effective by the agent. Unless God give the increase, Paul will plant, and Apollos will water in vain.

This seems a discouraging state to be in. But God's methods of dealing with the children of men are often very different from ours. And he who seems to us to be in the greatest darkness and danger, and nearest despair, is often standing on the very threshold of light and hope.

II. And hence I come, in the second place, to affirm, that *this consciousness of his native weakness*

is to the Christian an occasion of strength. And such is its result, 1st. Because it inspires diffidence and caution. Next to revelation, one of the best schools in which to learn our native character, is experience. It confirms the teaching of the former, and proves its principles to be true by actual experiment. He who has tried his physical strength, and tried it in the vigor of his days, and under favorable circumstances, need not be told what strength is in his arm. He knows it, for he has strained its muscles to their utmost tension, and can tell precisely what they will bear. And shall not experience in religion just as well attest the existence of facts, and lead to as certain results? If the Christian has learned by actual experiment what he can do, and what he cannot do, be it little or much, anything or nothing; surely, he will be careful not to expose himself unnecessarily to such trials, or such enemies, as will be an overmatch for his strength. He will not venture into the company of the infidel and the wicked, lest he learn their ways, and become entrapped in their wiles. Well does he know, by past experience, that the remaining corruptions of his nature are in league with these adversaries of his soul, and are ever ready, at their bidding, unless watched with an eagle eye, to unbar the door, and give them admittance into his heart; and the best possible way to escape the temptation, is to avoid their intercourse altogether. He who stands in "the way of sinners," will soon walk in the "counsel of the

ungodly," and will finish his preparation for perdition, by sitting in "the seat of the scornful."

A proper apprehension of his weakness restrains him from every scene of dissipation and vice. Nay, that which is lawful, he may not find it expedient for him sometimes to do, lest it give others an undue advantage over him, and be an occasion of sin. What the world calls innocent amusements, or indeed that amusement which, when moderately indulged in is really innocent, may, from circumstances, become such a bait to entrap his soul, as to require of him a self-denial of their enjoyment. For, as a writer has remarked, he who knows that he has so much tinder about him, should not invite the sparks. The self-conceited may be bold, but the humble will always be diffident and vigilant. He will not boast in high-swelling words of his prowess and courage, or think that he can stand where others have fallen, who were firmer than he. If David and Peter, and others, who were saints, have been overcome by the evil one, he will not presumptuously take their place, and throw their circumstances around him, and hope to escape. He will not make haste to be rich, or fasten his affections upon worldly goods, lest he should "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." He will not give a loose rein to his ambition, nor aspire after worldly honors, lest he find himself inadequate to their difficulties and dangers; or become so dazzled by their

distinctions, as to lose sight of his latter end, and of the crown of glory.

If God calls him into an arduous and perilous situation, the call insures his safety ; for God will not permit our duties to become inlets to temptation, or task our powers above what we can bear. Nor will he follow the pleasure-loving throng to their vain and worldly amusements, lest they fasten their toils around him, and pierce his soul through with many sorrows. "Vanity of vanities," has the preacher written upon them all ; and the voice of warning, coming from one with the experience of Solomon, proclaims as with seven thunders in his ears—beware ! The self-sufficient are never safe, for no one can warn them without giving offence ; but the man who knows himself is not high-minded, but welcomes, with thankfulness, admonition and reproof. Faithful to him are the words of a friend, for they are not meant to kill, but to heal.

2d. I remark, that an apprehension of our weakness is an occasion of strength, as it leads to prayer. He who fancies his strength sufficient for the conflict, will not beg for assistance. Nay, it is more natural for such an one to glory in his fancied achievements, and to suppose himself full, lacking nothing. Such was the character of the self-righteous Pharisee, who presented himself before God in the temple. How little apprehension of his own weakness had that man, as he boasted of his attainments, and of the superiority of his piety ! How different from his neighbor

the Publican, who smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

When a man concerned for his safety, finds that he cannot rely upon himself, he will naturally look for some prop on which to stay his weakness. When disease has seized upon us, and prostrated our system, how natural to turn, in our helplessness, to the friends that move around our bed, and ask of them those offices of kindness which their strength enables them to perform! Thus it is with us under a sense of our spiritual weakness; we are then disposed to call upon Him who is able to hear and to save. So cried Jonah to the Lord for strength, when the waters compassed him about, and he went down to the bottom of the mountains; so prayed Jehoshaphat in the pressure of his straits, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee."

The Christian, apprehensive of his weakness, will not rush presumptuously into the battle with his powerful adversaries, lest he fall in his blood and perish. He rather hastens to call upon the Captain of his salvation, and to receive from him that whole armor that will enable him to stand in the evil day. This is one of the grand prerequisites of salvation, a coming to the throne of grace under a sense of our necessities. Prayer is the first natural cry of faith. And to have it, and not exhibit it in ardent, earnest, supplication to him, who is able to save in every time

of need, would be as unnatural as for a hungry child not to cry to the parent for necessary food. What is prayer, but the voice of weakness supplicating the strong for strength? What the prayer of faith, but the lever that moves the arm that moves the universe?

In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength; and "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk, and not faint." The babe cannot support itself, yet it is not abandoned. Provision is made for it in another, and what its little hands cannot, its cries and tears can effect. The mother has but to hear, in order to run, and to relieve and to indulge. Yet even she may forget, or prove unkind, or unnatural. But the God of grace never forgets the children of his grace, nor says to the seed of Jacob, "Seek ye me in vain." With such a High Priest as ours, that has passed into the heavens, we can come boldly unto the throne of grace and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need.

3d. Therefore our weakness becomes strength, as it encourages and animates us by bringing us under the certainty of the divine promise.

Paul besought the Lord thrice to remove the thorn in his flesh; and though this particular request was not granted, yet the blessing contained in the answer was so much better, beyond conception, than he had hoped or expected, that gladly does he bear his tribu-

lation and rejoice in it. And you hear him exclaiming, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Better that our weakness should remain, if we are upheld by the strength of the great Redeemer, than to be removed, and we puffed up with ideas of our own ability. Better to live in apprehension of danger, if it humbles us and leads us to God, than to feel secure if it makes us proud and high-minded. He that is high-minded should fear, but he that lies low need fear no fall.

Besides, there is something winning and endearing in confidence. Who would take away the life of a bird that fled to his bosom from the talons of an eagle? or who would take such shameful advantage of his confidence, as to deprive the little trembler even of his liberty? Nothing is ever lost by trusting to the ingenuous and noble-minded. They always feel the responsibility, and will repay the confidence. What then may we not expect from the God of all comfort, whose compassions fail not, and whose liberal hand is ever open to supply all our wants? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "O, taste," then, "and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him. The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

But not only his mercy but his honor is concerned to succor those who rely upon him. "He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." "He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich he sendeth empty away." He has confirmed the immutability of his counsel by an oath, and all his attributes are pledged to the fulfilment of his gracious promises. Having loved his own from the beginning he will love them unto the end. Having "begun a good work in them, he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

"His honor is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep ;
All that his heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep.

"Nor death nor hell shall e'er remove
His favorites from his breast ;
In the dear bosom of his love,
They must for ever rest."

Therefore, feeble and destitute as your spiritual condition may be by nature, you need not fear to know it, since suitable relief of every kind is provided. This apprehension of our weakness is the best evidence of prosperity, and there can be no better or more enviable state of mind. With the lowliest there is wisdom, and affluence, and might. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It was when Bunyan's Pilgrim was in the valley of humiliation,

contending with Apollyon, that he had the strongest perceptions of his own weakness, and yet it was there that he gained his greatest victory over the adversary. For his lowliness of spirit led him to distrust himself, and to call for succor to Him who was able to uphold him.

When we are weak, our resources are not future, but immediate. The armor is at hand every moment, and the Saviour present to give strength to wield it. This the world may not know, for, as I have remarked before, it is a strange paradox to be weak and strong at the same time. But ye know it, and your positive experience is, that when you are weakest you are strongest, that the grace of God is sufficient for you, and that his strength is made perfect in your weakness. So that, with Paul, you are ready to glory even in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you.

Finally, let each of us seek to understand better this Christian paradox—that weakness is strength. Let us, humbly and prayerfully, cultivate an intimate knowledge of our own frailties and infirmities, that we may rest more fully upon the strength of God. Let us “be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make our requests known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” And let us not look to the world for either help or comfort, nor be conformed to it in its vain maxims, false prin-

ciples, and corrupt practices. O let us remember that, "the fashion of this world passeth away." It passes like some grand procession, some gorgeous pageant, through the crowded streets. The staring crowd wait the appearance with eager eyes, and place themselves in the most convenient posture of observation. They gape at the passing show, they follow it with a wondering gaze, and now it is past—and now it begins to look dim to the sight—and now it disappears. Just such is this transitory world. Thus it begins to attract the eager gaze of mankind, thus it marches by in swift procession from before our eyes, to meet the eyes of others, and thus it soon vanishes away. And shall we always be stupidly staring upon this empty parade, and forget the world of substantial reality to which we are hastening? No; let us live and act as the expectants of that world, and use this one merely as a state of discipline.

"The fashion of this world passeth away." O that I could successfully impress this exhortation upon your heart, and lead you to break off your over fond attachment for the world, and to prepare for immortality. O, if the spirits that have departed could return and take my place, would they not with united voice call you to prepare for eternity? Ye frail, short-lived, mortals! Ye near neighbors of the spirit land! Ye borderers upon heaven or hell, loosen your hearts from earth. And remember this, I say, brethren, with confidence, "*The time is short.*" All its schemes of affairs, all the vain parade, the idle

force of life, passeth away. And away let it pass, if we may obtain that "better country, even a heavenly"—

“Where the rivers of pleasure flow o’er the bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns ;
Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet ;
Where the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul.”

Some of us may be on the borders of that happy land. Yet, in a little while, and the tempter shall cease to annoy us ; the power of sin shall be subdued ; the pains and sorrows of life shall be over ; and we shall be for ever imparadised in the bosom of God our Saviour. And is this, indeed, to be the case ? Are these days of temptation and warfare so soon to close ? Is that last fearful conflict to end in such a glorious triumph ? Are we so soon to gain admission, through the pearly gates, into that holy city, whose dazzling light and inexpressible glory are God and the Lamb ? And shall not the prospect fire our hearts ? “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep ; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” What ! shall we sleep, whilst the kind angels at the gate are waiting to welcome us home ? Shall we sleep, when we are so soon to be companions of prophets, and apostles, and martyrs ? Shall we sleep on the very threshold of glory ? At the very reception of glit-

tering robes, and starry crowns, and palms of victory? Oh no! Let us awake. Let us be up and doing. Let us watch and pray. Let us be also ready; for in such an hour as we think not the Son of man cometh. Yea, let us be faithful unto death, and we shall receive an unfading crown of life.

Let me but hear my Saviour say,
"Strength shall be equal to thy day,"
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all-sufficient grace.

I glory in infirmity,
That Christ's own power may rest on me.
When I am weak, then am I strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song.

I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While his own hand my head sustains.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHILO AND FRANKLIN LITERARY SOCIETIES,

OF

JEFFERSON COLLEGE,

AT

THE ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT,

AUGUST 5, 1851.

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ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE PHILO AND FRANKLIN LITERARY SOCIETIES :—Deeply sensible of the honor conferred upon me by your flattering choice, I have bid adieu, for a little season, to the classic groves of my own mountain academy, and the younger sons of science that there cluster around me, to mingle in scenes to which I was once not a stranger, to look again upon venerable forms that have ever held a cherished place in my memory and my heart, and to address you upon subjects befitting the place and the occasion. Wanting, as I feel myself to be in many of those qualifications necessary to constitute the interesting and successful speaker, I could gladly have listened to one, more capable by age, experience, and exalted literary attainments, of imparting to you that entertainment and instruction which you seek from the exercises of the hour. But after these testimonials of your friendship, as unmerited as they are flattering, I should be lacking in courtesy to you, and respect to myself, were I to refuse contributing my

little share to the literary festivities of this auspicious day.

More than half a century since, was laid, in faith and prayer, the foundation of a collegiate school, on these then borders of civilization; heaven smiled propitiously upon the enterprise, and "the little one has become a thousand." The rude hut in which the good M'Millan gathered around him the sons of those hardy pioneers who had carried with them into the wilderness the torch of science and the lamp of truth, has given place to stately halls, where, in the very centre of civilization and refinement, congregated hundreds imbibe from the lips of instructors, loved and revered, those lessons of wisdom, human and heavenly, which teach them how to live and how to die.

The men who planted churches and academies in the very footpath of the receding savage, were transmitting to posterity the rich legacy they themselves had received from sainted sires. They were the worthy descendants of that elect race who forsook the beautiful lochs and glens of their own Highland home, to rear new altars upon the mouldering ruins of those which God had cursed—to graft their stubborn thistle upon the graceful shamrock, and to mingle the wild melodies of Erin's harp with the sublime strains of the Hebrew bard. If they loved learning and liberty, it was because they loved religion better; and whatever is peculiar in their national character, or that of their descendants in this

cisatlantic world, is owing to the simple earnestness of the faith they cherished,—a faith which has ever been in direct antagonism with all that is superstitious and sensual in the church and arbitrary and tyrannical in the state. With them that religious sense, which, after all, is the most prominent element in our common humanity, had been baptized into the spirit of a pure and free gospel, and necessarily worked out its results in that complete emancipation of the mind and heart, whose best and most enduring monuments are these free institutions and their concomitant blessings.

And here are we to look for the motive power of the world, that connate religious sense which man possesses. It is the great formative principle of human society, underlying and running through all the endless varieties of national character that prevail, giving to art its forms, to philosophy its arguments, and to law and government their sanctions. There may be a false religion and a mistaken worship, a religion that degrades rather than elevates, that embodies within it the essence of the sensual, rather than the spiritual. Yet it does not disprove the natural foundation of the principle, and its perfect accordance with the general sense of mankind.

The fountain may be pure, whilst the streams, as they recede from it, may receive such admixtures from the soil through which they flow, as highly to sully their purity, and vitiate their taste. God is,—and therefore this universal feeling of veneration and

reliance; an inward sense of indigence and dependence has written, upon the fleshly tablets of the human heart, an argument for his existence and providence which can never be wholly erased. The invisible things of God also are clearly seen from the things that are made. The evidences of his wisdom and his power are seen in the heavens above, and the earth beneath; they shine forth in every star that glitters on the brow of night; they are read by the student of nature in the mimic worlds of microscopic life that reposes on the leaflet, or sport in the dew-drops. This is the strong bond, which, amidst every modification of custom and clime, unites man to the Deity; and, in the reflex tendency of the spirit that emanates from Him to terminate upon Him, has created, amidst all the sophistries and absurdities of a false worship, for the Greek his Elysium, for the Mahomedan his paradise, and for our own untutored Indian his hunting-ground of the happy.

But not only in its purely moral sense is it the distinguishing sentiment of the race; whatever progress men have made in science, in art, in law, and in government, has been owing to its proper cultivation and development. It was reverence for her tutelary deities that erected those stupendous pyramids of Egypt, that stand to this day the dumb but expressive record of the power of her shepherd kings, and the unrivalled skill of her architects. Degrading as was the idolatry and gross as were the superstitions of that ancient land,—yet the mighty ruins of Carnac

and of Luxor, sublime even in their desolation, reveal some of the loftiest conceptions of the human mind. That light of genius and that wealth of art, which look down upon us from their polished and richly carved propylons, carry captive our senses and almost tempt us to overlook the superstition in which they had their origin, and to transfer our reverence from the sacred Apis and fabulous Busiris, to the gigantic minds that conceived, and the plastic hands that wrought such stupendous wonders.

If we pass downward to Greece, we find the same strong religious sense giving birth to nationality and life to art. It was older in its origin, firmer in its hold upon the mind and heart of the Athenian, than the most sublime and subtle teachings of the porch and the grove. It was not the offspring of argument, nor did it make its home merely in the reason, but in the conscience. Its laws were written by the finger of the "Unknown God" upon the heart, and were therefore destined to retain their force unimpaired by all the artful disquisitions of Sophists and the jargon of Schools. If Greece was the glory and wonder of the world, she was made so, not by her philosophy, but her religion. Those magnificent monuments of art, which prove Athenian taste and refinement, were reared to perpetuate, not the lessons of the Academy, but the common religious sentiment of the State. It was the achievements, not of Sages, but of God, that conceived the inimitable frescoes, and richly-carved capitals of the Parthenon, and that gave their inspi-

ration to the chisel of Phidias, and the pencil of Praxiteles. It gave birth to those forms of art, because it underlies every foundation of human device, from the days of Cadmus and of Cecrops, and it had been interwoven with all their political and social relations, and become a bond of union stronger than the wisest decisions or the most stringent enactments of the Amphictyon. When threatened either with foreign invasion or social dissension, their rallying point was around the pillared fane, where the oracle's response was the signal either for victory or defeat; their last appeal was amidst the ascending smoke of hecatombs to Olympian Jove;—their last defence the glittering ægis of the blue-eyed Minerva.

And thus has it ever been, and thus will it ever be. Religion is not only the true Promethean fire, which has given to the arts and sciences their vitality; “political society also moves upon *its* axis;” and the varied features of national and social character that divide the race, and fix more certainly than walls of adamant could do, the boundaries of kingdoms, find their type in the faith that is taught at the mother's knee. New forms, new laws, new institutions in the state, grow out of preceding religious movements in the church. A poor solitary monk in the dismal cell of his monastery, with the yearnings of a heart for more substantial food than missal or penance ever gave, reads by stealth, as if it were a crime to be punished by the judge, that Bible which had been left to moulder amidst idle legends and absurd tradi-

tions, in its damp recesses;—and lo! that cell is illuminated with a heavenly light;—the fetters of darkness that had bound a despairing soul, are burst in sunder. Impelled by the life of a new and better faith, the intrepid monk goes forth to preach his heart's experience; and the chord touched in his own heart, vibrates in a thousand others; the bondmen of "crown and crosier" fling aside their shackles, and the truth which began its conquest in the cell of an obscure German monk, has at length worked out its results in a "church without a bishop, and a state without a king."

If, then, in the language of another, "the glory of a nation is in its God," if a people have a tutelary deity to preside over their destiny, who merits the homage of the mind and of the heart, how rich the legacy transmitted to us in this land of the setting sun, by those who, in days before ours, grappled with oppression, civil and ecclesiastical, and, amidst agonies unutterable, nurtured that plant of renown, of whose pleasant fruit we are permitted to partake! "Here, for once, has arisen a people, whose source and first life was zeal for God," and who occupy the chief place of power and glory amongst the nations, because He whose praise is in their temples, and whose word is in their hands, is the "Father of the spirits of all flesh."

The God of our fathers is our God. The hopes that nerved them to do and suffer, when persecution had lighted the fires of Smithfield, and filled

the dungeons of the Tolbooth, are to us as the unfading bow of promise, and inspire us with new and holier zeal in our crusades against the despotisms of the world. Whatever of glory our country has achieved, or is yet destined to reach, is but the native growth of that indomitable spirit with which the Puritan and the Covenanter did battle for their faith, when the hoarse cry of the panther was yet heard on your hills, and the footprints of the savage yet fresh in your forests; and he who pretends to account for our free institutions and our peculiar nationality, and overlooks this fact, evinces a mind too weak and narrow to take comprehensive views of historic truth, or trace effects to their legitimate causes. If the New England States owe their present elevated position in our great confederacy to the Puritan spirit in which they were founded, our own great State, however slow we may have been to acknowledge it, is no less indebted for whatever is praiseworthy in her social and political condition, to *that manly, independent spirit of Presbyterian Scotland*, so thoroughly inherited by our revolutionary fathers and transmitted to us, their successors. Those principles of civil and religious freedom embodied in the Scottish national Covenant, for which they who subscribed it, and their sons, so nobly fought against a perjured king and corrupt Church, are infused through all our institutions; they are the life-blood that ramifies through every vein and artery of the body politic and social.

For almost two centuries has the memory of these

compatriots of Bruce and Wallace been given up to obloquy and reproach. The mildest epithets applied to them have been those of *hypocrites* and *fanatics*. They have been charged with enmity to all civil order, and denied the possession of every elevating and refining sentiment, and to defend them against the infamous attacks of the puling sycophants of royalty and their contemptible imitators in our own "model republic," was, until lately, to place one's self under the ban of civilization, and to be regarded as a bigot no less contemptible than those whose cause we espoused.

But "the memory of the just" shall eventually be blessed, and if the treasure which has been bought and garnered up for us at the price of blood is worth possessing, let no false modesty, no fear of infidel splenetics and flaming liberalists, prevent us from doing a simple act of justice to the memory of men of whom the world was not worthy. We admire the disinterested spirit of their descendant, which led him to devote his life to the grateful task of furbishing up their gray old tombstones, and rechiselling those records of their departed worth which time and decay had almost effaced. In our feeble manner we would imitate "Old Mortality;" we would inscribe fresh testimonials of gratitude on their monumental institutions which so well celebrate their deeds; and by briefly portraying the lofty sublimity of those patriot hearts, who

“For their country and their faith,
Like water shed their blood,”

—a sublimity which no envy can reach and no detraction hide, we would impress you, gentlemen, with the conviction, that the only glory that shall outlive the marble and the brass, is that which is achieved in the defence of truth against error, and of freedom against oppression.

Never had calumny whetted its shafts so keenly as when it united the press and the stage, the pulpit and the forum, in unholy coalition against those apostles of civil and religious liberty. Poetry and eloquence have lent their numbers and their fire to hold up in ludicrous caricature before the gaze of posterity, the very men from whom it has received everything that is pure in the Church and free in the State. In the simple evangel of the Son of God, whose promises were his daily food, the Covenanter had found written with an inspired pen the “great charter” of human rights. It taught him more explicitly than all the philosophy of the schools, his true position in the universe, for, in defining the nature and extent of his subjection to the powers that be, it recognised his direct relation to that higher law which proclaims God only as Lord of the conscience; and with this revelation of his nature, dignity, and destiny ever in his eye, it was not to be expected that he would tamely submit his free conscience to the dicta of blind authority, or learn “to swear in the words of any master.”

We need not wonder, then, that his principles would excite the hostility of tyrannic princes and their parasites, whose interest it was, if possible, to suppress all free discussions, and to toss and stretch upon the Procrustean bed of uniformity, creeds as distinctive in their features as were the respective nations by which they were held. His offence, in their estimation, was never to be forgotten or forgiven. He denied the truth of opinions which mediæval superstition and ignorance had converted into axioms of government. He flouted at the divine right of kings and of priests, and taught, in men's capacity for self-government and religious liberty, treason, which made him an outlaw from the State; and heresy, that rendered him an apostate from the Church. He had no slavish reverence for that dim, religious light, that came streaming from the past through the stained oriel of the cathedral, but with strong faith in man's progress, and the Church's glorious destiny, he labored to work out his own salvation, and to teach others that liberty of Christ, without which they remain either the serfs of tyrants without, or the slaves of their own blind passions within. Unlike the antagonistic spirit of his age, he despised the mere form of religion, whilst he revered and cherished its reality. To him the rubric, the cope, the consecrated ground, the dream-shaded window, were nought; whilst judgment and charity, the law and love of God, were all. He repudiated with disdain the senseless fabrication of a corrupt church

and a tyrannic state, that "priests and kings can *do no wrong*," and entered, before the world, his solemn protest against that assumption of arbitrary power, which impiously claims its right from the imposition of apostolic hands and the broad seal of heaven.

We are no man-worshipper; but next to the glory of Him whose perfections are the wonders of the universe and the song of saints, we revere his image wherever it appears; and, in despite of all the defamations of that toryism which would convert a perjured king into a blessed martyr, and a narrow-minded, mean-spirited bigot into a saint, we would do honor to the men who, when prince and prelate combined to crush every rising sentiment of freedom in the human breast, true to their God and their race, stood in the imminent deadly breach, and achieved that victory of right over might, that merits the richest blazonry with which a grateful posterity can adorn them. Never had Providence appointed men to a nobler mission. Never had a nation rallied at a more stirring watchword, or in a better cause. It was no Irish farce, with Jesuitic fingers working the wires, and playing off the great Milesian for a harlequin; no senseless Spanish feud of Carlist and Christiano; no superstitious crusade against infidel possessors; no theophilanthropic furor, trampling priestly robes in the dust, and wrapping its spurious goddess in mantles snatched from the shoulders of the Virgin; no mob of the "*profanum vulgus*" run demagogue-mad, and ready, as its passions take a turn, to burn

a church or sack a play-house. Far from it; it was the struggle of devout, heroic men, deeply read in the Scriptures, and knowing and prizing their civil rights, to secure for themselves and to transmit to their children, the priceless blessing of a pure religion and a free state.

It is a strange inconsistency in American character, that a country constituted as ours is, one that had its origin amidst the throes of a revolution whose results are so beneficial, should be so slow in rendering justice to the correct principles and heroic deeds of the Scottish martyrs.

Separated, as we are, by a vast expanse of sea from the pageants of courts and pomps of royalty, we should naturally conclude that our historic and social opinions had escaped their deadly influence; and that wedded as we are to freedom, we would be prompt to suspect the justice and veracity of those whose chief business has been to write bitter satires upon the acts, and to make merry over the ordinary infirmities of its friends and martyrs. Their very sublimity of character, of which a parallel can scarcely be found anywhere, except it be amongst the illustrious names that inspiration has rescued from oblivion, has been exposed to the ridicule of the world by the writers of pretended history, or been served up as a savory dish wherewith tory novelists may spice their courtly romances, and render them more grateful to the aristocratic palates of those who hold the rights of conscience treason against the divine right of kings.

Need we wonder then that their deathless names have been so slow in finding their way to the deepest reverence of American Protestants and freemen, when, until recently, we have been looking at them through the false and distorted medium in which rampant Jacobites and heartless infidels have held them up to the gaze of posterity. What justice can a Scotch Presbyterian, whose only alternative was to bow submissive to decrees which made him a slave, or to "glorify God in the Grass-market," expect from men who see in a perjured king a martyr, in a bigoted priest a saint, in an apostate and traitor a patriot! What are Hamilton and Argyle and Warriston, to those who sing pæans to the deeds of Charles, and Laud, and Lauderdale, and to whom Lagg and Claverhouse, and the equally infamous Dalziel were models of all that is chivalric in the field, and gentle and courteous in the saloon?

How untrue to our own principles—how unjust to the memory of our Scottish fathers, have we been in yielding to these weak moods of malignancy;—leaving it to others, and to those, too, in whose eyes crowns and mitres shine brighter than our own emblematic stars, to decide for us great questions involving the most precious rights of Christians and of freemen, by some trifling defect or ordinary infirmity of our common nature, and to condemn to the ridicule of centuries men of whom the world was not worthy, because they were not Nazarites either by birth or by vow, and sang David's Psalms with a

villanously nasal twang. We may regret that they had their foibles, and who has them not?—we may regret that they occasionally fell into some of the vices of the age from which they sought deliverance. We may regret that any of them lacked that refinement of feeling and easy good-breeding, which distinguished the high-toned Cavaliers that clustered around the throne. We may regret that some of them overstepped the bounds of propriety and exhibited a heat, an irritation of spirit, that cannot be always justified. 'But let us not forget the fiery ordeal through which they were passing; let us not forget that with the outlaw's ban upon their heads they were driven from their homes, and hunted as the partridge upon the mountains, by princes in whose honor they had confided, and to whose sceptre they had been loyal, and that, merely because they chose to obey God rather than man, in things which pertained to the conscience and their moral duties. And surely no American, no enlightened friend of civil and religious liberty, who traces his present high-born privileges to their disinterested struggles and astonishing perseverance, can be so unjust to their memories as to seek their history in the representations of a licentious press and stage, or permit the lineaments of their character to be drawn by the satirists and dramatists of a court, whose crowning excellency was to revel in the caresses of harlots, and to sink the prince into the buffoon.

They were sufferers—sufferers unjustly, for merely

demanding what they had a right to enjoy, and if they ever rose in resistance, and retaliated upon traitors and apostates, the cruelties they had inflicted upon them, we must remember that after all they were but men of like passions with others, and that oppression will drive even wise and good men mad. Those who manifest a profound respect for the superstitions of time and place, and who make piety to consist in the administration of splendid rites, that carry captive the senses at the expense of the heart, may choose their historic opinions concerning the Covenanters, as the second Charles chose his religion, because it was more suitable for a gentleman. But they who read aright the manly, earnest Presbyterian heart of Scotland, nurtured, as it was, amidst the grandeur of lake, and glen, and mountain, and moorland, will find in it characteristics that assimilate it to those best days of the Church, when the beloved John was its minister, and the faithful Antipas was its martyr. In whatever light tory historians and genteel novelists may regard it, its deeds are the crowning glory of true heroism; its principles, that salt of the earth which has preserved it from moral putrefaction.

The men who disowned regal authority, and testified and contended with so much zeal and fortitude against the usurpation of Church and State, were the men of the people. They girded themselves with deathless resolve for a momentous struggle. They demanded the ancient landmarks, which ruthless

tyranny had swept away, to be restored; they demanded their rights, immemorial and inherent, which kingly prerogative had encroached upon, to be guaranteed by hostages that would not fail; and in the spirit of that chosen band, whose memory every American heart cherishes, they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, in defence of those priceless blessings which the God of nature has given to man as his unalienable right. They assumed the high character of witnesses for God, and fearlessly did they maintain it, until their martyr spirit had earned its reward, and the race, accursed of God and man, was hurled from the throne, and driven forth to wander upon the face of the earth, the scorn and contempt of the nations. Though few in number, "like the gleaning of grapes after a vintage," they lifted up the fallen standard of religious liberty, and generously devoted themselves to the sacrifice, for the good of those who were to follow. They would swear no oaths,—take no tests,—submit to no impositions upon conscience. Skulking in caves, languishing in dungeons, dying upon their native heather, they faltered not in their noble purpose, and to every command of unreserved submission, boldly replied "that all was not lost that was in peril, or forgotten that was delayed." A love of liberty they considered the national character, which it was their duty to maintain and transmit; a resistance to tyrants, fidelity to God, justified by the law of nature and the precepts of revelation. They fell, but their cause

survived; their blood, like the teeth of the fabled dragon, had produced a plentiful harvest, and that banner-cry, which had rallied the martyrs of liberty to the charge, still rung its stirring echoes through the land.

Whatever difficulties beset their transatlantic vindicators, who live beneath the shadow of a throne, and who would be regarded as most loyal subjects, in justifying their rebellion, there are none to us. The people who refused a cent for tribute, and who, rather than submit to the arbitrary enactments of a Parliament that denied them the right of representation, unfurled the standard of rebellion and drove out the royal viceroys,—they and their descendants, who approve their acts, would not have hesitated, under the tyranny of the Star-chamber, to have been fellow-regicides with Bradshaw and Cromwell, or maddened by the scenes of the Tolbooth and the Grass-market, to have tried upon the delicate limbs of Lauderdale his own favorite tortures of the boot and screw. We have no sympathies for royalty—no veneration for the sacred name of king; our republican associations forbid them. Trained in a religion, one of whose many merits is its simplicity of rite and form, we have no predilection for that hoary church, whose external pomp fascinated the senses, and excited the fancies rather than the faith of the worshipper. We are not so dazzled by the blazonry of a hereditary nobility, as to hesitate choosing between the stern old Cavaliers and the still sterner patriots who bade defiance to

kings and courts, and who felt that to be the servants of truth and the rights of conscience were the largest honor, and highest glory to which we could attain.

The very earnestness and truthfulness of such men, the lofty sublimity of the position which they assumed, became an enigma to those whose ideas of grandeur and heroism are coupled with courts and cathedrals, the blending of crown and mitre, the august part of priests and monarchs. But these are merely the gray old monuments of an age that is passing away; the emblems of a despotism whose iron yoke we spurn with the manly independence of freemen, "who know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain them;" and should not, therefore, obscure in our eyes the moral heroism of those who first battled for the right, and taught us the noble lesson. Justice and gratitude, every pure and ennobling sentiment of our common humanity, impel us to rescue their memory from that oblivion to which the modern admirers of feudal laws and medieval canons would consign them, and to reveal them to the world, like the elect Benjamite, in their true stature and towering grandeur, beyond the reach alike of detraction and praise. If, for almost two centuries, they have been lying under the ban of tories and churchmen, the reason is found in the inflexible logic of their Bible creed, and the simple earnestness of their evangelic faith. They had laughed to scorn the Episcopal grace, and refused to be confirmed by the Apostolic hands of those who claimed kindred with the mother of harlots; and all else went

for nought. Their sentence of excommunication was pronounced; they were not only delivered up to the uncovenanted mercy of God, but over into the hands of princes who could, when needed, unsheath the emblematic sword, and become most gracious "defenders of the faith." In the language of the inimitable Dogberry, their crimes might be summed up in one short word: "Thou villain! thou art full of all *piety*, as shall be proved upon thee by good witnesses."

A piety so vital, so productive of self-denial and stern heroism, is unintelligible to those whose "eyes are holden." They have no confidence in themselves, because the light that is in them is darkness. With their own supreme littleness and selfishness, the measure by which they mete the greatness and the good of others, without true philanthropic feeling themselves, they fancy there is none in the world, and that all pretension to it is but dissimulation and hypocrisy. Tried by such false tests, the Covenanter becomes anything his enemies may desire; the more conspicuous his virtues, the more profound his dissimulation; the more blameless his life, the more cunning his arts of concealment. We can but pity such blindness; we can but commiserate such perversity of mind, as leads men to call sweet bitter, and light darkness. They whose vision is bounded by the narrow horizon of the present world, can have no sympathy with him to whom this life is but a pilgrimage; who feels himself in a region of darkness and shadows; whose home is in that pleasant land which

the promises reveal, and who, disdainful of the gross and the sensual, feeds upon the heavenly manna, and quenches his thirst from the river of God.

Yet this, which has exposed him to ages of ridicule and contempt, is often all the secret of his moral heroism. He was the possessor of an inner life, the life of faith, and this sustained him, whether trampled on in the fields by the red dragoons of Claverhouse, or dragged as a felon to attest on a scaffold, how dearly he loved Christ's crown and covenant. He "endured as seeing him who is invisible." He may have been wanting in that mere wit and sentiment, so highly prized in literary clubs and country circles—for worldly wit and sentiment have but little in common with a faith whose chief element is its earnestness. Yet he had not that contempt for the imaginative and ideal that his enemies pretend. He lived in a world of his own creation,—a world more bright, more beautiful than Arcadian bowers or Elysian fields,—a world that was not all a fancy dream, for faith had revealed its reality, and given to the rapturous vision of the exiled apostle, "a local habitation and a name." If his body pressed the damp cave or the loathsome dungeon, his entranced soul wandered by the rivers of Beulah, or drank in the lingering echoes of that song, that is ever rolling down from the far off city of God. If he had no taste for that lighter play of the fancy which sports in a world of romance—he was by that very fact driven back into the deeper regions of feeling and

imagination—if he closes his eyes upon earth, it was with Milton to open them upon scenes where

“Angels trembled whilst they gazed.”

Already had he caught glimpses of unutterable glory, and he panted with all the ardor of awakened faith and hope for its full and perfect revelation. If he despised the distinctions and dignities of earth, it was because he was the heir of an inheritance such as Plato, with all his wisdom, never dreamed of, and Solomon, in all his glory, never equalled. In the beautiful and sublime language of another,—“upon the rich and the eloquent, upon the nobles and priests, he looked with contempt, for he esteemed himself rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language; a noble by the right of an earlier creation, and a priest by the imposition of a mightier hand.” What were the favors of courts, or the smiles of royalty, to him who was destined, before heaven and earth had been created, to enjoy a felicity that would abide when heaven and earth shall have passed away! If these were the illusions of fanaticism, they were certainly not without their type, in those that had thrilled the harp of the prophet and moved the pen of the Evangelist.

But I shall not weary your patience by a further vindication of these illustrious men, who commenced the crusade of liberty against oppression, and who achieved, even in their fall, victories infinitely more

glorious, and more beneficial in their results to the world, than those before which the crescent had paled at Ascalon and Acre. But we owe this much to justice, to pay our grateful tribute to the memory of sainted sires, whose blood is flowing through our veins. If Carthage gloried in her Phœnician origin, and Roman bards delighted to sing how the gods of Troy had left Dardanian ruins to place their shrines in Latium, it is with no less pride and pleasure that we trace the stream of joyous life that animates these western hills and vales, back to the pure fountain of "a royal priesthood and peculiar people." We shrink not from making the broad declaration, that the lever which has moved a torpid world into action and compressed ages of progress into a single century, is the spirit of the Scottish martyr. It was the spirit whose mission was to touch the heart's deepest chord, and develope the intellect in its true proportions. It is the spirit that has made that sea-girt isle—whose rude barbarians in vain resisted Rome's legions, in her Augustine day—the arbiter of nations, when the Forum is a desert and the Coliseum in ruins; the spirit that has converted this western wilderness into a fruitful field, reared the crowded mart and the smiling hamlet upon the site of the unbroken forest, and laid the foundations of churches and colleges in such intimate relation, that the ministrations of the one are made to accompany and bear upon the instructions of the other. The sons of those whose battle-cry was for "Christ's Crown and Covenant,"

were not unworthy of their fathers ; those principles of truth and freedom that had unsheathed the sword at Bothwell and the Boyne, were carried with them into the wilderness, were taught from the rude pulpit where your fathers worshipped, and mingled with the lessons of science, which dropped from the lips of a Watson and M'Millan. And from this and kindred institutions planted on this western slope of our own Alleghenies, by the descendants of the Covenanters, have gone forth, and shall continue to go, men strong in the faith of God and human nature, ready to stand at the altars of the one, or to lay a moulding hand upon the destiny of the other.

Greatly as the Puritan has been gloried, and we render him all due praise, for his agency in moulding our national character, we protest against its being exclusive. Those arts of war and peace that have given our country her present sublime position, did not all arise by Plymouth's Rock. Loth as we are to disturb the self-complacency of our American "*celestials*," who, like their brethren beyond the seas, imagine they are the people, and wisdom will die with them, we cannot, in justice to those whose manly and heroic virtues we honor, pluck from their memories the well-earned fame that clusters around them, or by a seeming burial-service, consign their illustrious deeds to the "tomb of the Capulets." We outside barbarians, who are descended from the Scot, may certainly, without violating historic truth, claim for him a modest share in contributing the formative ele-

ments of our character, and laying the foundation of our national greatness; though dead, he yet speaks through those who bear his image, and whose delight is to cherish and perpetuate these rights of a free conscience and a free State, for which, in the world's gloomy hour, he devoted himself to the sacrifice.

Whatever of toil he sustained, or glory he achieved in his struggle for freedom, originated in the republican tendencies of his Genevan creed. We feel no disposition to imitate the inconsistencies of those who sing pæans of praise to the Puritan, and yet barter his life-giving faith for a heartless rationalism, and lose sight of his steady and sincere attachment for law and order, in an ungovernable furor for change and doubtful reform. If the salvation, the glory of our country, is its pure Christianity inherited from its founders, our only hope of perpetuating what it has already gained for us, is in cherishing firm faith in its principles, and a consistent practice of its precepts; and to you, gentlemen, these sainted dead, who rest from their world-renowned labors, speak in every monumental pile, which their faith and zeal have reared, to falter not in your antagonism to that spirit of hoary oppression that thrives only where intellects are dwarfed from lack of knowledge, and souls perish for lack of truth. If ye would not be recreant to the trust which after long agonies has been committed to you, if ye would not be traitors to God and your race, let the religion which has wrought out your deliverance have a cherished home in your

hearts, and never, never while the pulse of life beats strong in your veins, permit it to be dragged down from its celestial height and trampled by the foot of the scoffer in the dust.

Schools and academies and colleges may be founded, but unless the Church is by their side, mingling its heavenly wisdom with the teachings of science, our republic with all the priceless blessings which cluster around its free and happy government will reel. Even our political orators announce to us, as one of the most common maxims of the age, that a pure morality is the very essence of freedom. Our eternal mountains and smiling valleys may remain until the final triumph; but let the Sabbath be profaned, let the altar of God be abandoned, let the creed of the Puritan and the Covenanter yield to the wild and absurd theories of the modern socialist and reformer, and we may soon write Ichabod on all our noblest institutions. We have been learning, in the events that have occurred during the last few years, that knowledge, however extensive and exalted, unless it be baptized in the fountain of pure religion, cannot bring order and tranquillity out of the confused chaos of revolution.

We bid you look at Europe; we ask no other illustration than boiling, upheaving France, where gigantic intellect has investigated every department of science, where logic has reasoned with a precision unsurpassed, where arts have flourished in perfection, and poetry and eloquence have achieved some of their most splen-

did victories ; but where no Bible has taught the truth of God,—where men are mere babes in all that knowledge that maketh wise unto salvation. Upon what can be grounded her hope of success in her present great experiment, when she lacks the only balance-wheel that can regulate aright the movements of society ? What can we hope for a people who hold the laws of the Most High in the same contempt, that they do the statutes of the monarch they hurled from the throne ? We may expect them either to degenerate into the grossest licentiousness and re-enact the fearful scenes of the reign of terror, or by ordinary reaction submit again to the yoke of some legitimist or usurper. It is as true of nations as of individuals, that they who have no regard for the authority of God, will soon lose all respect for the laws made by their fellow-men ; and the nation that will trample under foot the one, may soon be left without the safeguards of the other. With these lessons of warning around us, let no motives of false shame tempt us to neglect or contemn that religion which leaves the human heart unshackled, and flings wide the portals of God's holy temple ; nothing but this will hand down to the generations that are to succeed us, the blessed boon for which strong hearts in the hour of peril, “pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.”

Into your hands, gentlemen, shall we soon commit the trust received from revolutionary fathers,

whilst we go the way of all the earth, and upon you, under God, does it depend, whether this beautiful fabric of American freedom shall stand the witness and the pledge of man's ability for self-government, or sink amidst the sneers of despots and the tears of patriots, a melancholy monument of human frailty. To you are the nations to look for the science of self-government; to you for that religion that is to curb their licentious passions, and mould into order their lawless minds. Remember that no man liveth for himself; he liveth for God, his country, and his race, and he who ignobly forgets it or selfishly cuts asunder the tie that binds him to his fellows, in the curse that he brings upon himself and others,

“Living, shall forfeit all renown;
And doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.”

With some whom I address the labors and pleasures of a college life are about to close. The point which seemed so distant at the start is at length reached, and the quiet walks of the Academy, with all the hallowed associations that cluster around them, are now to give place to other relations, to other duties, and to other scenes. The studies of the recitation-room, and that generous strife of intellect which has so often gathered you in your proud old halls, were but means to accomplish an end. That

end is gained, and with armor bright and burnished, and ready for the conflict, you are now to bid adieu to these groves of Academus, with the truth you here garnered up, and throw yourselves into that wild, tumultuous arena, where you must save yourselves by earnest, manly action, kept up to the last, or perish. It is a great thing in any age to understand the opportunities and wants of life, or to be true to its responsibilities; and to you, in view of the especial character of the period in which you live, it is a precious probation, for it has connected with it issues unutterably momentous and solemn. We are in all probability approaching a new epoch in the annals of the race. The great deep of human society is broken up, and the world travails in birth with some mighty new creation. No serious mind can contemplate the signs of the time, and not be satisfied that Providence is working out some of its grandest problems, and that the unwritten history of the world is pregnant with events as interesting and as thrilling as any that have ever been marked by the finger of the Almighty. Already has the political sea of Europe been wildly agitated, nor have our own peaceful borders escaped the dashings of its tumultuous waves; and, though human sagacity may not foresee all the consequences that may grow out of these political and social agitations, yet none can doubt they are giving an impulse to the great ocean of human mind that shall be felt for ever through all its profoundest

depths; and upon this wild, tempestuous sea is the voyage of life to be made; amongst opposing rocks and dangerous quicksands, your passage is to be steered, if you would reach a happy destination. To guide you safely across it, we have held up before you the beacon lights of the past. We have pointed you for imitation to the illustrious examples of our covenanting fathers, who through faith wrought righteousness, and subdued kingdoms. Like a mighty cloud of witnesses, they gather around you, and urge you onward by every motive that can animate a brave and noble heart, to that meed of immortality with which their deeds are crowned.

But we would be recreant to our high trust as an ambassador of God, and wanting in affection to you, did we not most earnestly recommend to you, in this perilous voyage of human probation, that chart and compass of heavenly origin, without which your frail vessels of human existence must drift on unpiloted and uncared for, until they have met the shock of the horrible tempest, and have sunk hapless and helpless wrecks. Remember that they only whom God guides are well guided. High above the wild commotions of this troubled sea of life is there a pavilion in which you can hide and be safe until every calamity be wholly overpast. Winds and waves and human hearts are in God's hands, and when his purposes have been accomplished by their blind and impetuous fury, they shall sink to rest at his bidding.

“ His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.”

If, then, young gentlemen, you value your country's honor and the welfare of your race,—nay, if you would seek individual usefulness and happiness,—seek them not only in the acknowledged blessings of science, but in the cultivation of a morality whose purity is unsullied, in the possession of a religion whose reward is immortality. These can gratify the desires of the largest and most grasping ambition, and inscribe your name with that of the Puritan and the Covenanter, on a tablet more enduring than the sculptured marble, or the monumental brass. If ever, in generations hence, your names shall flash through the mists of antiquity, it will be because, like the illustrious men of Scottish history, you sought the happiness rather than the glory of your race, because you linked your memory with those moral revolutions, whose tendency is to brighten it here, and to prepare you for a splendid destiny hereafter.

And whether you return to these consecrated halls or tread them no more, may the lessons of wisdom, human and divine, received from the lips of those who love you, and whose prayer shall follow you, be not forgotten; may that light which shines from above illuminate all your pathway through the world, and when the hearts that are now beating high with health and hope shall have ceased their throbbings in the quiet of the tomb, may you rise amidst the

joyful acclamations of "Well done, good and faithful servants," to take your places amongst the first-born members of that happy household whose gathering song is love, and whose harp-strings never vibrate to a requiem.

THE END.





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Hughes

~~A sketch of the life, character,
and writings~~

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